



APA
TECH



National Aeronautics and
Space Administration

Washington, D.C.
20546

February 21, 1979

Voyager 1 took this photo of Jupiter and two of its satellites (Io, left, and Europa, right) on February 13, 1979. Io is about 350,000 kilometers (220,000 miles) above Jupiter's Great Red Spot; Europa is about 600,000 kilometers (375,000 miles) above Jupiter's clouds. Although both satellites have about the same brightness, Io's color is very different from Europa's. Preliminary evidence suggests color variations within and between the polar regions. Io's surface composition is unknown, but scientists believe it may be a mixture of salts and sulfur. Europa is less strongly colored, although still relatively dark at short wavelengths. Markings on Europa are less evident than on the other satellites, although this picture shows darker regions toward the trailing half of the visible disk. Jupiter is about 20 million kilometers (12.4 million miles) from the spacecraft. At this resolution (about 400 kilometers or 250 miles), there is evidence of circular motion in Jupiter's atmosphere. While the dominant large-scale motions are west to east, small-scale movement includes eddy-like circulation within and between the bands. This photo was produced from three black-and-white images taken from blue, green, and orange filters and assembled by the Image Processing Lab at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory. JPL manages and controls the Voyager Project for NASA's Office of Space Science.

The Voyager Project

Two unmanned spacecraft, Voyagers 1 and 2, are now on their way to study our giant outer planets, Jupiter and Saturn, and 11 of their major satellites, several of which are larger than our own Moon.

The Voyager Project was assigned to the Jet Propulsion Laboratory as part of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration program of planetary exploration. JPL communicates with the spacecraft through a worldwide network of deep space tracking stations located in California, Australia, and Spain.

Voyager 2 was launched from Florida on August 20, 1977; Voyager 1, which flies a faster trajectory to reach the planets first, was launched on September 5, 1977.

At Jupiter, Voyager 1 made its closest approach on March 5, 1979. Voyager 2, whose more cautious trajectory will avoid much of Jupiter's intense radiation, will make its closest approach on July 9, 1979. Satellites being studied are Amalthea, Io, Europa, Ganymede, and Callisto. Jupiter's Great Red Spot will be photographed and studied intensively by both spacecraft.

ROLF

APA-TECH 01100B (#12)

April 1981

The 555 Times #12

The Amateur Press Association for and by
members of General Technics

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The Next Deadline is Monday, June 1

** NOTICE: SEND ALL MATERIAL TO GREG RUFFA. HE IS GTB FOR APA-TECH #13 !!! **

The Copy Count is 35 (or else!)

Minac is 2 pages every other mls.

YOUR ACCOUNT BEFORE POSTAGE IS \$ 10.53

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Those who are being held in stasis and had best postmail: Bill-EI, Dick
Marty, Robert

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Jamie (2), Greg (2), Donna (2), Jon (2), Gordon (2), Mike
(2), Steve (2), Keith (2)

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THE CHAIR IN TRANSIT or THE CHAIR BECOMES A LOVESEAT

NOTE: The GTB has determined that below paragraph is hazardous to those who aren't particularly romantic or who have allergies.

"In Spring a young man's ideology
Lightly turns to applied biology."

Ogden Nash

Spring has arrived and with it all those crazy urges and desires that afflict humans at this time of year. Even though they hate to admit it, they were creatures of instinct not too long ago. When there's no more snow on the ground, the air is warm, and the frost has broken, they must get out of hibernation. They bud (no hydra jokes, please). They grow.

Spring makes humans go slightly nuts. The same changes that signal plant growth and animal awakening messes up humans' hormones. Something inside them goes PING! and the fever begins. They can't wait to leave their houses and heavy coats that they've been hiding in all winter long. They yearn to abandon for a moment the heat from their main frames and disk drives and warm

themselves in the spring air. They want to dance like Fred Astaire in Easter Parade (which I've just seen) and pick daffodils. They want to be frivolous (they can't fool me). They want to change and start anew. They want to be in love (if not today, then tomorrow. Trust me.)

The changes come in all sizes. Those can be as small as new glasses or hair styles (very radical for some of us) or as big as new jobs, places to live, or lifestyles. The urge is there. Now you can ask the question, "Why is she writing all of this?" (Why IS she writing all of this?) Because our members are good examples of these changes. (And if you wait while I lift off the saucy curtain I'll tell you.)

Mike Bentley is now in the wilds of Rochester working on something involving the 68000 and medical test equipment. It sounds very challenging and I hope that it doesn't cut into his writing time for Apa-Tech.

Marty returned from the West Coast Computer Faire with high hopes for his new new threaded language, Runic. He had a booth there where he demonstrated Runic and presented a paper on it at one of the sessions. His chief trepidation had been the presence of the entire contingent from the Forth Interest Group (FIG), devotees/ worshippers of another threaded language. Aside from them threatening to lynch him, Runic was greeted with interest and a lot of encouraging words. The president of FIG even invited Marty to attend the FIG dinner (maybe they figured that banquet food would be punishment enough for his crime.)

Marty too has made the big decision to pull up roots and move. At the end of April he will be moving to the new mecca of General Technics, namely Kalamazoo. He'll be working with Alex at the Computer Room. He has also decided to become a slumlord and a homeowner -- he has just bought a two apartment house. His new address is 525 W. Walnut St: right across the street from us. He'll be postmailing as soon as he recovers from the shock.

Misha finally got so sick of Houston that he's left Lockheed and has returned to Fort Collins. He's got a job with a small company that writes environmental impact statements. He'll be working there a year to get his Colorado residency back and then he's going back to school to get his PhD. Will we finally have a professor in our midst?

Jamie has made the move to live with his lady love. He is also moving into a better job. Good luck in both endeavors.

And in case any of you haven't heard, I got myself engaged to Alex. I think that he's used to the idea by now (so maybe I can untie him.)

Don't forget! Greg Ruffa is the guest editor of this coming issue of Apa-Tech, Apa-Tech #13. Send all material for that

issue to him. Don't send anything to me. If you do I'll just have to send it to him and debit your account for postage.

Watch your account balances! Some of you are running pretty low on funds. If you're too low instead of setting your A-T you'll get a measly post card informing you that it's being held for ransom in lieu of money. (Please keep my bank balance large.)

That's all till four months from now (from me, anyway; I'm sure that Gres will have much to say.) Remember that next issue is our second anniversary so I hope that we'll break all previous page counts (and give Gres a crash course in what it's like to run an apa) to celebrate this auspicious occasion. Take good care of yourselves and take some time to relax.

GFB

ABOUT THE COVER

Congratulations! You have just received the latest in APA-Tech Coverware. Yours is number 42 in a very limited edition of 35, which won't be repeated if I have anything to say about it. But after all, how many APAs have a full-color, hand-painted cover? The 35 Jupiter prints came from an AIAA (that's the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics, and student memberships are really cheap. Contact your local chapter for details.) wine and cheese party. Nobody objected when I said "anybody mind if I take more than one of these?" so I took 35. The logo was designed by me and applied through a process that used to be known as hand-printing. Utilizing only the most modern materials, I created a laminated cardboard master, then applied iridescent acrylic paint with a synthetic sponge. Isn't science wonderful? Repro quality was unfortunately somewhat uneven, so if you've got a good one you're lucky. Early prints were marred by an inexperienced technique and later ones suffered from a degenerating master, but there are a choice few from the middle...

ABOUT THE OTHER SIDE OF THIS PAGE

My roommate Dave received this from a friend of his, who got it lord-knows-where. I don't know how many of you might have seen it, but I felt it was worth reproducing here for those who haven't. Anyway, it Prevents White Space.

That's all from me for this bit, I have to get back to my zine.

David D. Levine

THE ALIEN INVASION

BY LARRY NIVEN



This fast-breaking news flash ... should have reached you fifteen years ago. Sorry, gang, I was slow on the uptake. The Pierson's puppeteers must have been on Earth for much longer than that, but it's been at least fifteen years since they first showed their hand.

We've known about these aliens for about that long. They rule a sizeable interstellar trading empire. Three-legged creatures four feet tall at the shoulder, two-headed, with mouths that serve also as hands and a brain case between the bases of the necks ... their biological skills must be almost magical, to have disguised themselves as human. They should have changed their characters too, since that was what gave them away.

The puppeteers are cowards. No, that's too simplistic. Cowardice is a philosophy and a religion with the puppeteers. They are fanatics as regards safety. On the puppeteer world there are no hard surfaces and no sharp corners to raise bruises. Their machinery and their power sources are infinitely dependable.

And they caused the Man-Kzin Wars in order to breed a "rational" kzin; they brought into being the Birthright Lotteries in order to experiment with human evolution; they caused the Fall of the Cities on the Ringworld in order to gain a trade advantage. Clearly the puppeteers love to meddle, especially with alien species.

It now seems certain that Ralph Nader is a Pierson's puppeteer. His record speaks for itself: a fanatical pursuit of safety in all things, often to the point of madness. But there is corroborating evidence.

1) Ralph Nader has been quoted as saying that plutonium is the most toxic substance on Earth. Now, there are not many poisons that will signal you from across a room, if you're carrying a Geiger counter. But Mr. Nader's statement is stranger than that. It is as if he never heard of botulism toxin, which is thousands of times more toxic than plutonium. How many humans among you have never heard of botulism toxin? Could it be that his species is immune to botulism toxin?

2) Mr. Nader is known to have switched from an electric typewriter to a manual, in order to save electrical power. It's easy enough to compute that the power he saves in

this fashion would be the same if he had changed a 100-watt bulb for a 40-watt bulb, anywhere in his house. It's tempting to jump to the conclusion that the man can't add and subtract. This is difficult to believe of a Pierson's puppeteer.

But ... puppeteers throw huge amounts of power around very casually. In escaping the galactic core explosion they didn't bother with spacecraft; their Fleet consists of five worlds moving almost at light-speed. Mr. Nader may be confused by a problem of scale. An electric typewriter uses too little power for a puppeteer to notice.

3) Consider the automobile seat belt as of, say, 1974. That seat belt was designed to Mr. Nader's specifications. I own a 1974 car. My seat belt not only screams at me if I don't have it fastened, but won't let me start the car.

And a woman was raped by four big men because her car wouldn't start. They didn't give her time to fasten her seat belt. Any human being could have predicted such a result.

And any human being could have predicted that strokes and ulcers and heart attacks would be caused by a car owner's frustration with his arrogant machinery. Or with the 55mph speed limit, for that matter. Ralph Nader didn't.

4) You want more proof? There's a way to go after it. If Mr. Nader is indeed a Pierson's puppeteer, or even if he fears atomics as much as he claims, he certainly carries a Geiger counter at all times. Finding it may take some skill. It could be wristwatch-sized, or ring-sized or even implanted.

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We have no way of knowing how many puppeteers now wander among us in human guise, going about their

mission to turn the Earth into a world safe for Pierson's puppeteers ... and a world desperate to purchase power from the puppeteer-owned General Products Corporation. But they should be easy to recognize.

They are compulsive meddlers; they are fanatics on the subject of safety; their meddling causes many deaths due to power brown-outs and blackouts, because they don't understand industrial power at the relatively tiny levels practiced on Earth. They don't want us doing research in DNA, because we might stumble onto their own methods. Their understanding of human beings is faulty.

If a two-headed, three-legged creature has enough biological skill to disguise itself as human, it may equally well be using dolphin or whale form to meddle with the customs and evolution of those intelligent races. Now, a good many organizations, including Jacques Cousteau's, are trying both to save the whales and to ban nuclear power plants. It seems a peculiar pairing of totally unrelated subjects -- unless these disguised puppeteers are trying both to build a world safe for puppeteers and to protect their spies among the cetacean population.

One more point. Puppeteers do not favor space travel. The human longing for the stars is not in them. A sane puppeteer is never seen off his own planet; he doesn't trust spacecraft. Our invaders did not come here willingly, and they are not sane even by puppeteer standards.

A Pierson's puppeteer may be expected to seek power of one kind or another. If he chooses politics, he will vote against funding for human-built spacecraft; in favor of ever more restrictions on nuclear power plants; against fusion research; and in favor of preserving the environment regardless of cost to citizens. What he says in public may sound idiotic to human beings. Problems of scale will confuse him; he may be found speaking of solar-powered automobiles and the like. His private dealings may follow puppeteer patterns: blackmail as a part of normal trading, for example, and an unhealthy level of paranoia.

As I say, they should be easy to recognize. And what do we do then?

Frankly, I haven't been able to think of a thing.

(A) NONE OF THE ABOVE

A page in the bewildering saga of one W. Skeffington Higgins, amateur Magnet Measurement Operator and professional Science Fiction Fan. Headquartered at Apartment 1A, 853 Lorlyn Drive, West Chicago, Illinois 60185, or (312)293-1050. Bigger mailboxes, as well as intense proton beams and supplies of liquid nitrogen and helium, available at M.S. 344, Fermilab, Box 500, Batavia, Illinois 60510. This is (at last!) Spinthairiscope Media Publication number Ten. Or is it Eleven?

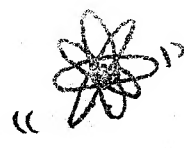
Eye Tracks in the Sands of Time

We bibliomaniacs are constantly swapping notes on what's good to read, and what to avoid. This is a fair reason for keeping a BM or two around in one's social circle. In this spirit I would like to recommend a few excellent volumes I have read recently.

Rockets, Missiles, and Space Travel, by Willy Ley-- An eminently readable history of rocketry. Willy was one of our century's great science writers, and this is the subject where he really shines. The book went through seven or eight editions as Ley added more and more new developments. He really did his homework, but in addition he was on the scene from the 1920's onward, and was personally involved with the VFR's efforts to develop liquid-fuel rockets. I have read about all this stuff a hundred times before, but I found the book enthralling nonetheless.

Less Than Words Can Say, by Richard Mitchell-- This is by far the most powerful and carefully reasoned of the recent "abuse of English" books. Rather than taking pot shots at bureaucrats, advertising, and the military, Mitchell identifies the source of most of our language problems as the educational system. He demonstrates that the typical writer of that empty, meaningless prose which abounds in our society is not simply careless-- he is a victim of "a worm in the brain," eating away the ability to think and communicate logically. I STRONGLY RECOMMEND THIS BOOK TO EVERYBODY!!!

How to Lie with Statistics, by Darrell Huff, illustrated by Irving Geis-- This 1954 book is still definitive. Through many examples it demonstrates the various ploys one can use to "prove" any case with numbers. It is not at all technical, and certainly succeeds in giving the reader an awareness these tricks and distortions. Read Mitchell's book for words, read



THANKS TO
KURT, TULLIO,
AND MARTY
FOR THE
FILLOS!



(I GOT
TOO LAZY
TO DO 'EM
MYSELF!)

HIGH 145

this one for numbers, and it will be much more difficult for The Government, Business, Madison Avenue, The Chicon Committee, or anybody else to pull the wool over your eyes. How to Lie is also one of the best examples I have seen of illustrations complementing text perfectly-- Mr. Bentley please note.

The Supper of the Lamb, by Robert Farrar Capon-- How can I review this one? It is a cookbook, but it is more than a cookbook. It brims over with a love for food and wine and all created things. The late (alas!) Joe Evans assigned this for his "Basic Concepts of Political Philosophy" course at Notre Dame. The first question on the first exam was "Why has this reading been assigned for this class?"

The answer, nearly as I can make it out, is that Capon promotes a new way of Seeing (Joe would at least have written it with a capital S, or more likely have hyphenated it: see-ing) the kitchen. We all need a fresh look at our world if we are not to go stale, and Capon provides this in a most delightful way. It is a cookbook for people who hate cookbooks --or even cooking-- and, having read it, you will never look at an onion the same way again.

Quote of the Month

"The fourth dimension is Money." --R. K. Barger

One or two of you have bugged me concerning the titles of my apazines. It happens that I enjoy making up titles so much that I use a new one every mailing. But I suppose there is no reason to make you suffer, so on this occasion of the publication of the tenth Spinthairiscope Media zine, I offer

The Observer's Guide to Spinthairiscope Media Publication Titles

1. Why Did the Chicken Cross the Möbius Strip? -- A question I devised which seemingly can have no answer. (Pinxit 1)
2. Anything Loose Is Bein' Flang --An expression describing a lively discussion, which I quoted from a Pogo strip. (Pinxit 2)
3. Alexander's Ragtime Bandersnatch --A pun on a popular song (not, interestingly enough, in ragtime itself) and Lewis Carroll's frumious Bandersnatch, which of course pops up again in Niven's stories. (Apa-Tech 4)
4. Roses to Deadend the Clods as They Fall --A line from "Streets of Laredo." Look it up. (Apa-Tech 5)
5. Etaoin Corflu --A small fannish perturbation of the printer's mnemonic, "etaoin shrdlu." These are the letters appearing most frequently in English, in order of frequency. (Apa-Tech 6)
6. She Was Built Like a Brick Synchrotron --Once Barry Gehm was

visiting here and had to catch a plane. We had enough time for one, but not both, of two things: giving him a tour of Fermilab, or visiting Angel. He decided that the machine would still be here on his next visit into town, and opted for Angel. I was impressed that her womanly virtues could compete even with the World's Largest Proton Synchrotron... (Apa-Tech 7)

7. A Licorice Bazooka --One among many unlikely candies in Mrs. Quoad's collection. From the Disgusting English Candy Drill scene in Thomas Pynchon's novel, Gravity's Rainbow. (Apa-Tech 8)

7(?). (This is apparently where I fouled up the numbering system somehow... maybe this is the eleventh SM zine...) Ten O'Clock Squalor --Pun on the nursery rhyme: "A diller, a dollar, a ten o'clock scholar." In my school days I sometimes didn't show up for Quantum Mechanics until ten-fifteen or so... (Apa-Tech 9)

8. You Are the Clown of Creation --Remember the old Jefferson Airplane song "You are the Crown of Creation?" (Apa-Tech 10, Shadow Postmailing)

9. Hot as a Pistol, but Cool Inside --Robert Hunter's description of Neal Cassady, from the Grateful Dead song "He's Gone." Does anybody here know who Neal Cassady is, or am I talking into a vacuum? (Apa-Tech 11, postmailing)

10. (A) None of the Above --A simple joke on multiple-choice tests. (Present mailing, Apa-Tech 12, I hope...)

See? None of those was too hard, was it? For the archivists among you, I should point out that Pinxit (Latin for "He paints") was Lisa Mason's unfortunately short-lived apa for artists. Kurt Erichsen was also a member.

I shall have to straighten out my numbering system, and announce the results in my next issue ~~as if anybody cared~~.

Mailing Comments

{I will try to keep this relatively brief, as my zines have been weighty lately. And not even a thirteen-page monster can get a comment out of Steve Johnson.}

ReneGe-- How come Bob Osband is STILL listed as "Richard?"

Bill R.-- My lamented Adventure game was also a "plug-in" type; that is, the structure of the game was mostly independent of the rooms, objects, and doorways that made up the dungeon. So it would be pretty easy for a user without a lot of programming skill to invent his own version of the dungeon, providing he knew the rules for putting it together.

14
Rod-- My favorite Niven novel is still World of Ptavvs, his first. It is very tightly plotted and has a great density of ideas. //Isn't there a Zelazny story-- "The Collector?" -- that features a creature like your Suck Rock?

Dave L.-- I am enjoying Weinstein's The Fillostrated Fan Dictionary. Still pretty curious about those Stones, though. //I have been meaning to mention this to you since we put the Chicago Pyro together: When doing cartoons, try to make them either five inches or ten inches wide, so they're easy to fit into the format. //Someday I will tell the full story of Dry Ice Capades... //A nasty letter to the Hyatt is in order, regarding your parking woes. Maybe they can ditch the bums currently running the garage before any more SF cons are held there. A word to the City-of-the-Big-Shoulders-Concom wouldn't hurt, either. //Speaking of Toledo, does anybody have the words to the song John Denver sang about that town?

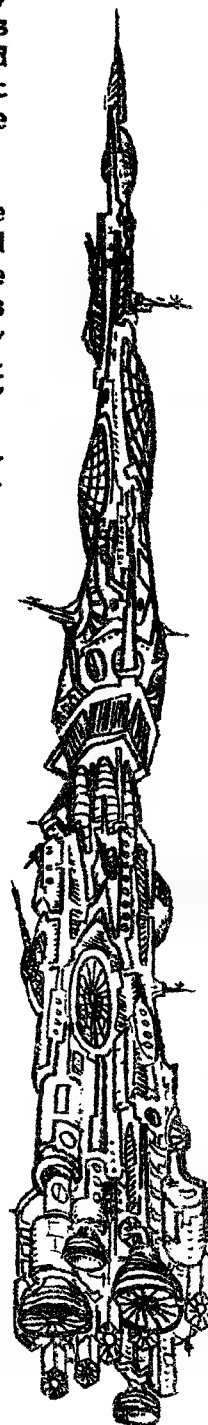
The hangar shot you speak of from 2001 was seen from inside the space station's hub. That's why the ship is stationary and the star background is rotating! There is nearly negligible weight there, so the placement of control rooms and windows is arbitrary. // Totally lost? Damn. So much for my crystal-clear explication of the Doppler effect. I thought it was simple, but I guess my opinion doesn't count for much... // The term "New Wave" seems to have come to SF from art via jazz. So it doesn't really belong just to us. And it will probably pop up again in some unrelated field, further down the pike of History.

Martha-- I encountered in Ted Nelson's writing the distinction between "software," described as the instructions or programs to perform a series of operations, and "data," the stuff on which the operations are performed. So books, records, and videotapes are not really "software" under this distinction-- which you may or may not agree is a useful one.

Misha-- "Out into the void" could be a lot closer to home than another stellar system. It could mean exploiting resources in the asteroid or cometary belts, far from Earth, where little interference from distant groundhog politicians can be expected.

Valli-- Television has brought us a lot of good things, but most of them seem to have been old movies. Even the best of teevee is fairly mediocre. Only occasionally does it rise to truly exciting levels: I recall the recent PBS special on puppetry, hosted by Jim Henson; lots of the appearances of Steve Allen, one of my heroes; and coverage of the space program, back when the networks thought people cared.

Jamie-- Tom Krabacher has recently departed for Ghana with his wife Shirley. // Caught the second Lupin III film at Capricorn; it was very impressive. A standard spy/caper plot, which could easily have been a mediocre film if shot in live action, was given fascinating touches of humor and mood through clever use of animation. While the animation was way above the Saturday Morning level, it was nothing special. But the



JP

animators included detail at just the right spots, and their control over colors was quite effective. // How did you write the celestial mechanics of your Spacewar program? A few equations or lines of code might help pin down the problem. // Thanks for the ARPANET hint. Working on it... //

I find the Trimble s' notes on "Your Voting Rights" a little ominous; I would rather not have a Worldcon that was overly sympathetic toward fringe fans. Rumor has it that there are TWO L.A. in '84 bids, one backed by Bruce Pelz and his buddies, the other by the Trimbles. Presumably the second committee is what they have in mind when they say, "By carefully selecting a committee which has a record of being sympathetic toward special interest groups, fandom could be rocked!" No, thank you.

Greg-- "Hemlock Five, this is Tango Bravo Niner. Please read me your revised orbital elements..."

Like cartoons? Read the splendid Of Mice and Magic by Leonard Matlin. It is a history, arranged by studios, of the American theatrical cartoon. I found the section on Warner Bros. especially good, maybe because I've seen so many of their films. // This mailing seems to have reaped your best crop of puns yet! // Discussing unreduced Voyager data as it comes in has the same immediacy and excitement as early election results. Sure, it's shakier than the papers which will eventually appear in Science, but it involves the TV viewer in part of the fun. God would not have allowed us to send data at the speed of light if He did not want us to look at it right away.

OF COURSE IT IS NOT TOO EARLY TO TRY FOR A SPACE TELESCOPE JOB!!! Might as well write directly to the newly appointed director of the STI, Arthur D. Code of the University of Wisconsin's astronomy department.

Jon-- We've known for a long time that Schawlow is crazy. Didn't he invent the laser typewriter eraser, and the trick of popping a blue Mickey Mouse balloon sitting inside a clear one? I am still a little confused-- did you repeat the jello laser experiments yourself, or did you just spread the story of it around fandom? Jerry Corrigan ran off copies of the journal article for Todd and myself.

Gordon-- Maybe you and Jamie can start up an underground Cartrivision network. //I am by no means a social misfit, but I spent a lot of years waiting for something like fandom, and I am glad I found it. I, too, have found that SF tends to take up all my social energies-- at least in a town like Chicago with its large fannish community-- and that I must work hard to maintain contact with my non-fannish (though hardly "mundane!") friends and relatives.

Steve-- Will the proposed robot exhibition/contest at Denvention crash and burn?

(A) None of the Above

Mike B.-- I, too, wanted to know more about how Domino worked. But Michaelmas is not that kind of novel, and I'm not sure Budrys knows. (Corner him at some con and ask.); I respected the author's decision not to go into the nuts and bolts, because that has no real relevance to the novel. What is important is that Domino is a person, a character as fully developed as any other in the book, even though he is also a machine. // For the record, the Capricorn trivia contest was very good, to the extent that the final single/double Jeopardy round ended in a 900-900 tie! Roxanne, Jim, and I lost the tie-breaker when we couldn't think of as many Norton titles as Doug, Gretchen and Jerry. But we had a good time-- it was a gripping contest, and the questions were really good. // Jealous of Carl Sagan? Write lots about science and become famous yourself! I am sure Carl will not stand in your way. // English is obviously not as bad as Romance languages or German when it comes to investing words with a gender bias. // You are so taken with the 432-- can you tell us just what effect the introduction of the 68000, z8000, and other 16-bit machines had upon the computer field? It seems to me they made relatively little splash, compared to the appearances of, say, minicomputers or the 8080.

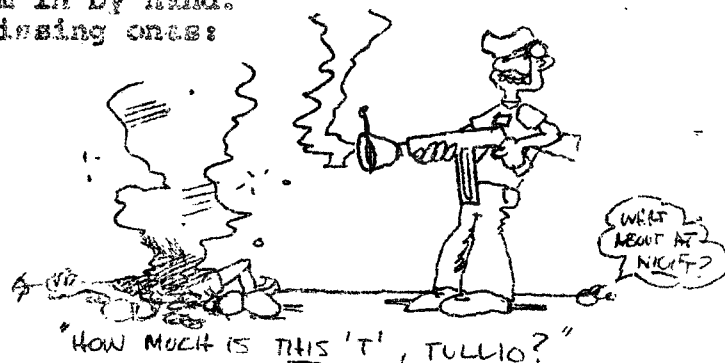
Keith-- Dijkstra "started the whole structured language business?" Excuse me-- but isn't Algol structured? and is it not a very old language? If it was lying around for so long, why did the anti-GO TO craze take until 1968 to get started? // Because of the enormous distribution advantages of SFR and Locus, there is no way Pyrotechnics could win a Hugo, unless somehow the semiprozines are eliminated from the category, and the "real" fanzines such as Janus, File 770, and Rine stand a fighting chance again. Also note that Pyrc is really a newsletter for a small segment of fandom, and as things stand now would not even get read, much less voted for, by more than a small fraction (10%?) of the final-ballot voters. Print runs would have to be more like thousands to have any effect.

If I said that almost every word of your description of fans applies to me, you wouldn't have much of a fight on your hands, would you? (Too bad you didn't catch me writing this MC on an even day of the month...)

Late-Breaking Doodles

Denn. Computer refuses to print apostrophes. I will have to put them in by hand. What would Zappa say? Here are the missing ones:
 000000000000000000000000000000000000

News flash: The Administration budget just submitted to Congress contains no significant cuts or increases for high-energy physics. This includes the Tevatron projects. The way everyone else is getting screwed, I'd feel guilty if HEP hadn't been running on a damned shoestring for so long.



*
* Post No Bills #5 *
*

* With the postage rates going to 18¢, who can afford to post anything? *

* Pre-Marconian ramblings from Bill Roper, 918 Main #1, Evanston IL *
* 60202 *
* (312) 328-9473 *

I think it is time to reconsider the UPS proposal for mailing zines to Chicago. Renee, please note...

This is another early one, folks. I don't want to mail the zine to Renee (especially after March 22nd when the postage rates will rise/rose again), so it's hack it out before Marcon time. And naturally, I'm once again producing the midnight special. On the other hand, I think I'm awake this time, so maybe I'll be a trifle more coherent.

It's summer job search time at beautiful KGSM, that annual procedure where first year MM students try to find jobs so that they can go out and apply their year's training and gain valuable experience which can be used to inflate your starting salary next year when you go looking for a permanent type job. It is a royal pain.

You see, these companies look real favorably on work experience--that (also) valuable commodity of which I have none, outside of my computer work at U of I on PLATO. (Not to say that that hasn't been somewhat helpful--I think it got me my interview with Arthur Andersen's Management Information Systems Consulting Division--but I don't want another summer job doing computer programming! On the other hand, I'd prefer it to unemployment, so...)

There's also the problem that a lot of the jobs are not in Chicago. Leaving aside for the moment whether or not I want my permanent employment to be in Chicago, there are major logistical constraints that become relevant when taking a summer job. Not the least of which is: what am I going to do about this apartment (that I worked so hard to find)? If I have to abandon ship for the summer, I can either sublet or give up the place, neither of which is really desirable. Ah well, I suppose I can cross that bridge when I come to it.

(The above are all symptoms of that pre-finals week syndrome--the finals are next week, the job search is going full blast--it's enough to give you IN-DI-GES-TION! (Take Pepto-Bismol, I know...) And, of course, I'm going to spend the weekend before finals at Marcon. Well, no one said I was sane.)

I might also mention that KGSM tuition will be up 17.4% next year--the highest percentage (and real dollar) increase at Northwestern. This at the same time that the Tribune is printing an article on the declining value of the MBA. Maybe computer programming isn't so bad after all...

Enough complaining about school, anyway. I've got to find something new and entertaining to complain about...

On the space program front, Time magazine reports that Reagan and Stockman are "ardent space buffs". Nice to know. Unfortunately, NASA took budget cuts anyway. (But was it politically possible to maintain NASA's budget at the same time that you're cutting food stamps? Damfino.)

Also, as you all know by now, the space shuttle launch went perfectly, despite the loss of a few tiles. Hokay, now we can get down to business.

(This is a heckuva way to put my membership in the ChUSFA Magic Committee on the line, but what the hey—you only go round once in life, so you've got to grab all the gusto you can, right?)

Speaking of the Magic Committee, let me mention (because I'm truly proud of it) a marvelous piece of magical schtick that I pulled at the Saturday night filksing at Capricon. You see, Clif Flynt had left the room to get a drink of water and had been gone for about fifteen minutes—an unusually long time to spend on such a simple errand. On the other hand, he'd left his guitar, so I knew that he'd be back eventually. On the third hand (useful when fingering certain chords) though, Clif and I left the Confusion filksing, leaving guitars behind and didn't return for two hours (we weren't up for listening to Horde songs, so it was by no means certain that he would be back in the near future. Nevertheless, I was on a roll that night, so I decided to stick my neck out.

Retrogression: Clif wrote an amusing little (14 (short) verses) filksong called "Mama Rosa's" which you may or may not have heard. It tells of the misadventures of an IRS agent who boards Mama's orbiting spaceport, bar, and bawdyhouse in search of back taxes. It's rather amusing. Well, in those long ago days before Northamericon, Clif sent me the lyrics in exchange for "Space Is Dark", and since I don't write a lot of humorous filk, I learned the piece so that I'd know at least one upbeat song that only one other filker knew. Clif then showed poor judgement—he failed to show up for NASFIC (he was busy doing renovations around the house he lived in at the time). Since Clif wasn't there, and the song weren't hardly nailed down, I stole it. Unmercifully. At least once a day. I'm also sure that I gave credit to Clif, but maybe I didn't do it loudly enough.

So Windycon rolls around and Clif and I along with other filkers are sitting around in a hotel room having a little filksing. Well, now between NASFIC and Windy, I acquired (on loan from the U of I library) a copy of Brady's Bend and Other Ballads by Martha Keller. The book is noteworthy because a number of the poems have been set to music and show up with regularity at sings. For the past year, I had listened to people like Anne Passovoy and Juanita Coulson complain about the fact that noone had put "Brady's Bend" to music. In fact, Anne claimed that it was probably impossible. She sat down and chanted the opening to the poem as she tapped out the rhythm on the back of her guitar, and it struck me that I could hear the proper tune in Anne's inflections—it was just a matter of getting a copy of the poem and working it out. And many months later, I got the book and did so, and was insufferably proud of myself. I was just waiting to trot the song out at Windycon.

(About this time, there should be someone in the audience asking what all this has to do with Mama Rosa's, Magic Committees, etc. Have patience.)

So I tell everyone that I put Brady's Bend to music, and Clif tells me that he has too. I play mine at him first, and we discover that the two versions are identical with the exception of one minor chord change. This seemed interesting. Clif then pointed out that he had done his version at Windycon the previous year. Oh, I said. Maybe I heard it, maybe I didn't. I didn't remember it consciously, at any rate.

I'm moderately embarrassed at this point—it's a comedown to discover that you have (semi-)independently recreated someone else's song. And then Judy Voros (nee Bentley) asks me to play Mama Rosa's. *gleep*

Look of sheer horror crosses my face. "I won't sing Mama Rosa's. Clif will sing Mama Rosa's." Clif meanwhile is enjoying putting on various expressions of mock indignation. I apologize to Clif, Clif sings the song, and the matter is generally forgotten.

Ok, time passes, and another Windycon rolls around. Once again, Clif and I are in a room sing with assorted other filkers, and Leah Fisher (who was not present at the previous year's sing) asks me to play Mama Rosa's. *gleep again* About this time, we were starting to wonder if there was a curse on this song.

Now it's time for Chambanacon. It's Friday night, I'm in the filksing room with assorted other singers, but not Clif who is still somewhere in transit between Shampoo-Banana and Ann Arbor. And someone asks me to sing Mama Rosa's. Well, why not? Clif's not here, and there's no telling when he'll show up.

I'm four verses into the song, and Clif walks into the sing. I've been had again! (He had just arrived at the con, you see, just in time to catch me borrowing his song again...) Well, now we know there's a curse on the song.

Which brings us back to Saturday night at Capricon. Clif's been gone for fifteen minutes, it's my turn to do a song, and the brain has just gone into high gear (must be a combination of too much caffeine and not enough sleep).

"Did you know," I asked, "that I am an amateur magician?"

"Why, no," replies unsuspecting soul in audience.

"Well, I am, and I'm going to cast a little spell right now. Clif Summoning I." And with that, I break into Mama Rosa's.

Six verses into the song, the totally unsuspecting Clif walks through the door, and everyone breaks up laughing. I finish the song, and then explain to Clif (with the help of Phil Parker's tape recorder) what had happened. "How does it feel," I asked, "to know that your will is not your own?"

Not bad for an amateur... (Would you believe I learned this simple technique from Psionics Made Simple by John W. Campbell? No? Ah well...)

WELLHOOBOYITBANTIMEFORANUDDERTARILLINGEPIISODEOFMAILINGCOMMENTSINDESKY,DE
STORYOFONEITALIANAMERICANTYPEWRITERVOTHASLANDEDINMYLIVINGROOMONITSWAYTO
DEMOONSOFYUPITER...

GTB: Have you considered taking the bus? I know it's the pits, but it is relatively affordable...

ME: Re my ct Gretchen--perhaps I did not make myself sufficiently clear. I like your zine, Gretchen. I like it a lot. Unfortunately, I must have been a bit foggy when I typed that comment. What I meant to imply was that I hoped to see more material that you initiated as opposed to mailing comments which reply to/comment on other zines (not to say that I don't want you to write mailing comments--all I need is to start another round of misinterpretation here), and that if you did so, I would endeavor to reward you as best I can--with a fat and juicy mailing comment.

Can I stop apologizing now?

(Also, allow me to note that Gretchen has never tried to get into my lungs...)

ROD: Yes, that is a terrible place to break your story. Um, have you considered exceeding a two page limit on your zine? The story line looks interesting, though, and I would like to see where you are heading.

LASERGRAM: There is no basic difference between a Jerry Corrigan and a Gerald Corrigan. As to why everyone in ChUSFA is a Gerald Corrigan--it's kind of a long story, but...

The root cause was Jerry's job as hotel liaison at Whatcon I. As hotel liaison, he was responsible for reserving the rooms for the GOH (Gordy) and the FGOHs (the Passovoys). He cleverly did so in and under his name. He also booked the room for the concom. As a result, all these people were masquerading under the name Gerald Corrigan--at least as far as the Holiday Inn cared. (Un)fortunately, Bob Passovoy thought this was too good a gag to pass up. So did I. So did several other people. It was decided that all the attendees at Whatcon must actually be Gerald Corrigans.

So much for Jerry's idea of remaining a relatively anonymous member of fandom. (It never would have worked in the long run, anyway--Jerry is not cut out for anonymity.)

As to why everything is Bentley's fault--he catalyzed the formation of ChUSFA through his absence. Naturally anything that goes wrong around ChUSFA must be Bentley's fault, because he (in absentia) started it all.

(Is there such a thing as a substance which exhibits catalytic activity when removed from a reaction? Does thiotimoline ride again?)

Re yr ct long distance: ITT has still not opened their Skokie number, so I am still dependent on Ma Bell. *damn*

MARTHA: Welcome to the pool--come on in, the corflu's fine?

YAAITSS: Thanks for the Voyager update. It's amazing when you consider how much more info we are getting from Voyager than we did from Pioneer...

VALLI: There are still a lot of good shows on TV. There may well be more good shows on TV now than at any time in the past. The problem is that when you look back at 30 years of TV, it seems like there used to be more good programming--but they weren't all on at the same time. There were a lot of real turkeys filling in most of the schedule.

You see the same phenomenon among people who praise British TV as being much better than ours--really it isn't; it's just that only the best British programs get imported for PBS.

JAMIE: How do you know that telepathy works? Personal experience? Unimpeachable witnesses?

Aha! You printed the address for Filkcon! Now I can write and get info on a con I won't be able to attend...*sigh*

GREG: Congratulations on the new job. I hope it does, indeed, become more interesting.

DONNA: Hope you enjoy living away from your parents.

ROXANNE: Are you diving in too, or are you merely tagging along on Donna's zine?

JON: Ha, ha! Ha, ha! I think we talked him into joining!

Nice piece on the Jello laser. What is the recipe for the nitrogen laser used to pump it?

GORDON: I think you may be entirely too far down on fandom. Certainly there are turkeys in fandom (I may well be one of them), but there are many good people as well. And if fandom is an organization of misfits, maybe it's valuable in helping you acquire the social skills to become less of a misfit. (God knows you won't get anywhere by sitting in your room alone.)

BILL H: I used to have a favorite FM station in Champaign that played soft rock--mostly requests. Of course, I can't pick it up now, but I've found that WCLR in Skokie is a reasonable substitute...I don't know if you can pick it up, but it's around 102 MHz.

I presume that between you and Guy, we will receive updates on the titanium boride superconductor?

The only place I ever saw Space Angel was on a small TV station in southern Illinois. I guess they couldn't afford anything more expensive.

I don't think that Windycon was necessarily too big--I think that the

Hyatt is too big for Windycon, which is another problem altogether. The only real problem with a big con is with those events which a large percentage of the attendees want to go to--and there aren't really a lot of those. I mostly go to a con to see people, and aside from the difficulty in finding people at a 1000+ member con, there's nothing that stops me from doing that. In fact, since there are more people at a larger con, there are probably more people there that I want to see--and that may be a problem, because there are only so many hours of convention, and I've got to sleep sometime, which means I won't get around to seeing everyone. But I can have the same problem at a small con where I have many friends, so...

I thought that Greasy Kid STF was bankrolled by MSU. I remember turning green with envy when I heard about the money...

There was a Wendy's within walking distance at Iggy that was open all night (almost--I think they closed for 2 hours at 4 or 5 AM to clean the place up). I nearly od'd on the things that week.

MU-BETAN: I hope you like Rochester...

KEITH: Better than Keith likes L.A....

I presume we will soon be seeing sketches by Keith Thorne?

I think I already used up my comments on fandom to Gordon. Sorry about that. (Did you two plan this, or was it great minds running in the same ~~gutter~~ vein?)

Damn, damn, damn, damn, damn. Half a page left, and it's 2:10 AM. *gork* And I'm not even equipped to fill the rest of the page with artwork. I'd better stall...

By the way, Keith, hearing what you go through in L.A. is almost enough to convince me that I must find a job in Chicago.

I suppose this is a good place to mention that I bought a new guitar. I've been lusting after a 12-string for some time, and I found one that (coincidentally) happened to be selling for the same amount as my tax refund. The only problem is that he had to order the guitar from the factory, and they had to build it--it's not a real popular model. I did get to play one at another store and it sounded ok, so I presume mine will too (not necessarily a good assumption, but...)

The store I bought the guitar from offers deep discounts on various guitars and supplies, so if you are in the market for strings and the like, let me know, and I'll see what kind of price I can get. (There are quantity discounts, and if he doesn't have it, he will order it.)

I also finally formulated (in a formal fashion) a new Finagle's Law corollary. I've actually had the thing kicking around for some time, but didn't put it into specific words until today, when Jerry and I were heading back to KGSM after dinner. It seems to be at least 95% accurate (usually sufficient for Finagle-type phenomena). Now Jerry told me that I shouldn't print this in APA-TECH, but why should I let that stop me? So

TRANSPORTER TOPICS

by
R. E. Smith
922 Belvoir Dr.
Frankfort, Ky. 40601
(502) 223-2119

Greetings, people! (and anything else out there) Welcome to another addition (that's edition) of this zine. First off this ish, a review of a con.

MANCON was nice this year, just the right size. There were enough people for a nice variety but not so many that it seemed crowded. I saw a lot of familiar folks there, and met some who before had only been a type face. I meant to bring a note card to keep memos on but had to work Friday morning on a special project and forgot it in the rush to leave, so forgive me for not mentioning all of those there. Several of the Isher group were present (maybe all. Their membership seems to change quite a bit), as well as the local GT'ers, the Duntemanns and the Van Dorns (who for some reason I kept refering to as Greg and Dutchin). Unfortunately, the only con function I attended was Jeff's talk, and I read through it. The video room was entertaining, with a Dr. Who glut of episodes from various seasons. The GT pool parties were fun, although everyone who used the jacuzzi came out beet red. Someone had the thing turned up to parboil. For me, though, the most enjoyable part was just sitting around, talking with people.

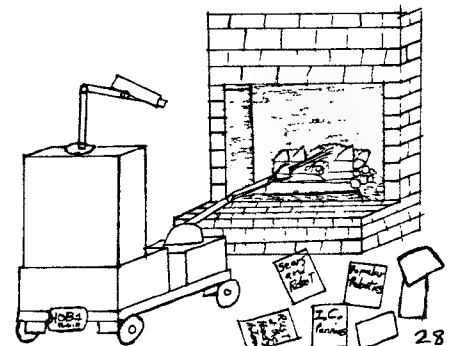
MAILING COMMENTS

Real Time Operator: I have heard of that theory. I have seen estimates that we have had some form of civilization on earth for at least ten thousand years. It may be, though, that the type of cognition experienced by individuals is generally determined by their society, and that imaginative thinking was the sole province of certain people who were able to get around the limitations. Are people more cognitive today than a thousand years ago? Or at least more of them not stuck in the mental rut that seems to afflict so many people?

Smoking Pistol: Yes, Bill, we should reduce the number of people in GT, and I'll be sorry to see you go. But seriously, folks, most of the people in this mess seem to have either a) been dragged in kicking and screaming by their friends and learned to like it or b) have seen some product of one or more members and been siezed by a compulsion to join. There had been no generalised effort to recruit, which is probably a good thing. No one should be kept out simply because no one in the group knows them. How we might go about reducing the load on Jeff I don't know.

About starship propulsion, I prefer the Sunwagon method, outlined a few months ago in Analog. Basically, you set up one end of a teleportation tube deep in the photosphere of the sun, with the other at the rear of the ship, making sure that the exit is pointing in the right direction! That's not a very good description, but you probably get the general idea. Instead of carrying fuel and reaction mass, you get them shipped special delivery. The range of the effect would probably be quite limited, but you could boost at 20 g's for several hours. Now all we have to do is figure out a way to take 20 g's for several hours.

Some current events, here. Reagan was shot today. By the time you read this there should be quite a few more details, but it seems that he may beat the presidential curse. Every president elected on a year that begins an even numberes decade since Lincoln has met a tragic end.



"It never hurts to remove Temptation."

.....(two days later) ouch! I meant to get this finished yesterday!.Oh, well, maybe it will still be in time. On with the zine!

Campaign Bills: Historically, the military has usually been the latest group to make use of a new technology. It has only been since the last part of the nineteenth century that they have gone for innovation in a big way. (This refers only to our civilization, since some of the early peoples, such as certain times during the Roman rule, did experiment. Anyone remember Archimedes?) Nowadays, of course, the only people who can afford the big bucks needed for weapons research are governments, and the only justification in many cases is for use by the military.

Westech: See Lupin III? I helped run the video room! As for the references, try The Dolphin Cousin to Man, by Robert Stenit, published in 1968 by Bantam.

The Ruffa Singularity: There's a question I meant to ask you at marCon, that time you were sitting in the lobby, drawing orbits. Given a high-efficiency, low thrust drive, like the proposed ion unit, what is the best orbit. Thinking it out, it seems a shallow arc, nearly a straight line, would be best, but that is not backed by any math. You may have heard me bragging about a proposed story with a neutral beam, 1/10th g drive. I need some idea of travel times from Mars orbit to various parts of the asteroid belt, and back.

Well, that's about it for the MC's. Those of you who aren't mentioned, please don't feel slighted. Everything is read at least once, but only the things that really catch my eye or are specific requests get reviewed.

Have any of you seen a short animated piece called "Animalympics"? Its a nice short that is a spoof mainly of the 1976 Olympics, but which also lampoons everything from the Miss America competition to several public figures. Gilda Radner does several of the voices. Also, while I'm on the subject of video, how many of you have been watching "The Greatest American Hero"? So far I have been pleasantly surprised. This could have been played very campy, but instead is played mostly straight.

'Scuse the change in type face. This is being done at work in an effort to finish on time. Procrastination is deadly.

I have been a bit disappointed in the last couple of Pyros. Maybe its just nostalgia, but it seemed more fun in the old days. On the other hand, it could be our fault for not submitting more material. I think that I will get a couple of items ready for the next issue. However, I am also working on an article on the Doom Patrol which hopefully will be used by the Comic Reader. Maybe this will encourage some of you to also start or renew contributing.

I'm affraid that's about it for this installment. I'll try to have more for next time, I promise!

Rolf

This Space Not Blank

and Greg Ruffa
P.S. Rolf, it was nice to finally get to meet you.

Ad:Ee:~Eb:Ec:(d+Se)=(SSb.SSc)

Rolf Wilson
158 S. Prospect #2 (This is going to change within 3 months,
Ypsilanti, MI. 48197 but to where, I don't yet know)
(313) 483-0291

Due to my just having read Godel, Escher, Bach, this APA will be written as a 3-part work for soloist, chorus and continuum.

ME

YOU

EVERYTHING ELSE

<p>Usually, when I write about what has happened in my life since the last issue, I have nothing more spectacular to talk about than a good book I just read. This issue is different. The fact that I am losing my job only has second billing.</p> <p>First billing goes to the fact that Mary and I are now engaged, in the traditional engagement ring style. (Polite yawns from the audience) Yes, I know some of you have heard this, and were not very surprised when you did. For those others, I am talking about Mary Morrissey, the small munchkin seen with me at various conventions. She is an undergraduate math student at the U of I, where we met at the ChUSFA meetings. It seems that fandom does have its uses... Mary will graduate in about a year, and we will get married sometime after that and start facing the two-career problem. Marriage seemed to be the natural next step in our lives. I</p>	<p>I KEITH</p> <p>"Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain" sounds like a very good idea to me - I am just an stick-figure artist myself. I have always been able to "see" in my mind how I would like drawings to look, but I could never come close to reproducing them on paper. I don't lack coordination, so it has always seemed that I still had some possibilities.</p> <p>MIKE</p> <p>About the Chicon trivia - nothing is certain yet, as they do not yet have anyone in charge of Special Programming to make the decision. Neither do we know anything about the Windycon trivia contest except that the Chicon people would probably like to get a look at the people doing the job at the Worldcon. Don't be sure that we are all extroverted. Some of us just know how to fake it... The LEGO exhibit at</p>	<p>I There seems to be a general problem among many of the fans I know of not having enough time to read the things they want to. I can afford books and issues of magazines, but the time to absorb all the information that I am looking for is often just not to be found. I don't nominate for the Hugos because I am still reading the magazines from 1979. My "reading list" of items that I have bought but not yet read has at least 500 books and 500 back issues of SF mags in it. I read fast, but all the new books and 1200 yearly new issues of everything from Analog to Track & Field News make it difficult to be up to date and catch up on the old stuff. There are other things that I like to do besides read, and some of them take up lots of time also. To get some exercise each week takes a number of hours. Perhaps I should get an exercise bicycle and use it while reading. However, I expect to catch up on everything</p>
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guess it all came very
easy for us.

As for my job, the
day before Friday the
13th, we were all told
that the entire plant
is being folded up and
moved to Coral Springs,
Florida sometime in
July. Previously, we
had been told that the
move was a couple of
years away. Maybe
Burroughs wants to be
ahead of its time. So
this means a total of
three and one half
months to find a new
job. This isn't really
bad news, as there is
a good market for
computer programmers,
but I wish that they
had given us a little
more warning. Since I
am tired of living 350
miles away from Mary
(I average 2000 miles
per month of driving)
I will be looking for
a job in the Chicago
area first. I've tried
looking in Urbana, but
it's a small market
with a glut of cheap
programmers. Since a
lot of you folks are in
Chicago, it sounds like
a pleasant enough place
to be. Even nicer, it
will mean a pay raise,
almost anywhere I go.
Burroughs is a nice
place to work, but they
don't pay very well.
So, sometime in May,
June or July I may be
moving into Chicago. I
welcome all advice on
finding places to work
and live. Of course, if
I find a REAL nice job
in Ann Arbor, I'll stay
here. A-squared is a
really nice place to
live. I mean it. But it
is 350 miles...

Windycon brought back
plenty of memories. In
Argenta, over 2000 old
LEGO pieces are stored
away. It's been years
since Erik and I made
our own space fleets.
Yes, you DO know the
Niven trivia quiz. I
thank you again for
typing it up when I
couldn't learn your
text processor quickly.

BILL HIGGINS

There are ways to
remove most typos from
text on a computer. One
method is to have a
table of probabilities
for letter "triplets",
that is to say any 3
consecutive letters.
A combination like FMO
would be unlikely, and
THE would be common.
A program that computes
the overall probability
of each word in your
text and sorts them by
probability. Since text
has a lot of common
words, the resulting
list would not be too
terrible. Checking the
least probable words
would find most of your
typing errors. This
system is available on
some computer systems.
The use of my story
finding system would
have to include some
examples of how each
question is defined.
I feel that psi powers
involve the power of
your own mind, while
magic involves a power
for force from outside.
If the point is not
defined very well, both
could be called true.
Where did you hear
that "The Right Stuff"
is not all true? I must

within 15 years. Greg is
not so optimistic - he
expects to die (about
300 years from now) at
least 10 times as behind
as he is now.

For about a year, I
have been editor of a
CHUSFA apazine, called
CHUSFA-US. It now seems
that it is going to die
from lack of people and
lack of interest. But
half the people in it
are in APA-TECH, so I
won't lose track of them

Well, does someone
know if Capricorn will be
held next year, and if
so, under what name? I
think Chicago can have
12 conventions a year,
unlike Champaign. To all
who do not know, there
will not be another
Whatcon. Well, it was
fun - and managed to get
Larry Niven into this
area of the world for
once. Speaking of Niven,
I see that "Dream Park"
by Niven and Barnes is
now out, if you want to
pay \$35 to Phantasia
Press. I'm not going to,
but it should be noted
that Ringworld Engineers
is now going for \$60.
Limited editions really
attract those collectors
I've spent a little
thought on the subject
of the kind of people
who program computers.
I found it puzzling that
there could be such a
shortage of people in a
well-paying field where
the actual work is not
much more than putting
puzzles on paper. My
conclusion - the ability
to solve puzzles, to go
logically through a
problem (which I and
most of my friends have)
is not really a common

Sigma is the symbol I admit that some parts I one. The people I know
for standard deviation. I involved information I (you) make it harder to
Therefore 3-sigma means I that would have been I see that most people do
further than 3 standard I very hard for an author I NOT attack a problem
deviations from the I to get. I logically, do NOT amass
mean - either positive I The dragons in The I facts and what they
or negative. From the I Earthsea Trilogy have I imply, and do NOT see
context, it should be I always been some of my I more than one way to
obvious that I meant +3 I favorite ones. When I I solve most problems.
sigma. Well, when I I ran a dungeon world, I Someone at work told me
checked it carefully, I the very largest of the I of a psychology test he
I found that 99.73% of I dragons were wise, very I ran while in school. He
a Gaussian distributed I uninvolved and nearly I gave a group of people a
population (bell curve) I immortal. Not a friend, I letter-addition problem,
will fall between -3 I not an enemy, but a I in which letters have
and +3 sigma. Thus, I I definite experience. I been substituted for the
was claiming to be I I disagree. I don't I digits in an addition
stronger than 99.87% of I think Greg is perfect. I problem like this -
the population - which I However, this is just I
would make me about 1 I because I feel that I
in 770. That's more I nothing CAN be perfect. I
than I meant to claim. I I don't have any real I
I think I can safely I examples about Greg. As I
claim to be 1 in 200, I a matter of fact, I may I
which would be +2.58 I be in the position of I He said that only one
sigma. Do notice that I a person trying to test I person solved it in less
I was sneaky enough not I the IQ of someone who I than 30 minutes. Most of
to define which group I is more intelligent I the people spent their
I was talking about. I than himself. Mr. Ruffa I time trying many random
I might actually make I is more perfect than I substitutions. When I
+3 sigma if you used I my humble (hah) self. I tried it, I first asked
the entire world as a I The whole discussion I to make sure that the
population - including I about matter-antimatter I letters and numbers were
all the children and I spaceships got started I a 1-1 mapping and that
females and elderly and I after I listened to I leading zeroes were not
undernourished third I Robert Forward talk at I allowed, then made a
worlders. A true test I Noreascon. He claims I table a possible values
would probably use I that you don't need I for each letter. Then,
American males between I equal parts of each, I letsee - M=1, D=0...
the ages of 18 and 50, I and therefore can make I and so on. Most of you
or something like that. I the needed amounts of I would have done much the
If someone can give me I antimatter. I don't I same. Stop a moment and
some statistics for the I understand why. If you I feel good. What you see
mean and distribution I want to ask him, Greg I as ordinary might not be
for a few tests of I has his card. I Even if you know how
strength from such a I I found the self- I to approach problems,
population, I could I preferential version of I you also need the proper
test myself against I the numbers joke in a I information. It's been
them. Remember, by I block on the mathematics I driven into my head just
"strength", I don't I of humor, so I'm afraid I how little I know. A
mean something like I you weren't the only I little physics. Almost
pushups, which are I person to come up with I no chemistry or biology.
related to the mass of I lit. I No economics, law or
the person doing them, I I sociology. A smattering
and also are move of a I BILL ROPER I of art, music, theatre
test of endurance than I I don't know who I and literature. Some of
pure strength. Things I I these areas of ignorance

like maximum bench press, squat, clean and jerk or snatch would be ideal. Even so, you could argue that the latter 2 also involve some technique.

Sufficient testing would yield a range of values for different movements or muscle groups. There is no single figure like +3 sigma which represents a person's strength. Now that I think of it, we still haven't come up with an adequate definition, because we have not drawn a line between "force" and "power". One is static and one is dynamic. It seems that I can't tell you how "strong" I am. Furthermore, why should you care? Strength is seldom important in the modern world. I make my living with my mind. About the only time I get to display strength is when I help push someone's car out of the snow. It's nice egoboo, but brief. All in all, there aren't that many advantages to being large and strong. Think about THAT, Dave Levine.

An update on my n queens program. Since the total number of possibilities was getting so large, I decided to look at the "best" paths first. To do this, I had to come up with an evaluation routine for a given placement. I chose to look at the spaces on the chessboard that the new placement would threaten that had not been previously in

Alaric Morgan is, so I can't tell you where he/she/it goes in my story-finding system. Sorry about skimming over the n queens too fast. Sometimes I think everyone knows exactly the things that I do. The smallest solution is for n=4. There are solutions for all n larger than 4. The smallest n for which in "superqueens" (which also have the move of a knight) can be placed is 10. This can be done by placing the queens for each column at rows 13,6,9,1,4,7,10,2,5,8. The problem has been covered pretty well by Martin Gardner in some of his collections of his Scientific American column.

Dot matrix printers have gotten pretty good in recent months. You can get a printer with characters 18 dots high and overlapped so that it looks very good. The price is \$1000, which is considerably less than any of the impact printers.

Bill, the problem (shared by many of us) is not that we like to EAT so much, but that we like to eat so MUCH. There are thin gourmets I

R.E. SMITH

Thanks for clearing up my confusion - I had always heard that tool called a "tire iron" and did not know any better.

LASER DAVE

Greg is a good cook.

I have caused me to not try writing any science fiction of my own. If there was a major in writing SF, it would be awesome. Everything I mentioned above, plus astronomy, climatology, political science and language, etc. Of course being able to write is unnecessary, although it may not have been in the past. Is there any other field where one must be knowledgeable about so much? If Larry Niven makes a physics mistake, he hears about it. If Fred Pohl doesn't check his number theory, he hears about it. If L. Sprague De Camp uses the wrong verb form in a dead language in a time travel story -- you get the idea. Is it any wonder that fantasy looks so much easier to write? No one can call you on the rules. Sadly, some writers try to fake it in subjects they do not know very well. Like David Gerrold and "When Harlie was One".

As I said earlier, I have been reading Godel, Escher, Bach. The title of this zine (which will give people some trouble in mailing comments) is a string of TNT, which stands for Typographical Number theory. This one translates into English as "there are infinitely many prime numbers", I believe it or not. I suppose the same can't be said for zine titles. After finishing GEB, I am recommending it VERY strongly to each and every one of you. If you don't have the money, I will LEND it to you. It

danger. This meant that I had to start keeping a three-dimensional array for the entire chessboard, which did not look to serious for $n=13$ Well, the results did not get much better. I gave up with my best result being able to place 75% of n squared. It should be mentioned that this result took a 120 by 120 by 120 chessboard. I ran out of memory, of time and of new ideas to improve the algorithm. I wrote to Martin Gardner, and he said that he did not know of any other work being done on this problem. He suggested that I try the Journal of Recreational Math. I guess I will. The problem is too big for a computer, so we'll have to give it to a person to solve.

I suppose my #1 complaint is "Don't they make anything that lasts?", but #2 is "Isn't anyplace open except when I'm at work?" Most places that provide some kind of service are open the exact 40 hours per week that I'm at work. My criteria for choosing one firm over another is often based on which has evening or Saturday hours. Thank heavens Ann Arbor has a book store open until 11.

Some time ago, I bought a Rubik's cube. Beware - it is truly fascinating, and can use up a LOT of your time. I found the David Singmaster book that Doug Hofstadter wrote

Nobody else confuses this pie for rock... One error in 2001 that I have heard is in the scene when the Pan Am shuttle approaches the space station. When the view switches to the reference frame of the docking bay, the shuttle is seen to drift slowly onto the center of the screen AGAINST A BACKGROUND OF CIRCLING STARS. The shuttle should have described a spiral from that viewpoint. To look as it did, it would have had to go in a rather unusual spiral. By the way, you lost the Whatcon Niven quiz by 2 points, 79 to 77. The victor was named Fred MacMurry. Hmm... Tic marks are dents on the left side of a grandfather clock caused by an overlong pendulum stroke.

You made mention some time back of IBC root beer. Is it only available where you live, or is there some way for us to try it? I like root beer, so I would like to try it. The best root beer I have ever tasted was in a German restaurant in Chicago, and I don't remember the name. The best soft drink I have ever tasted was many years ago in Mexico. It was something made with grapes, and was called Sangria Senorial for something that sounds like that. Sadly, I may never get to try it again.

Don't tell anyone that this sentence is just a page-filler.

I may take you a long time to read, but there is a lot in this book - and I don't mean 720 pages. Mike mentioned something about it, so I will give the full story here. Greg Ruffa, John Nine and I have done much of several trivia contests. We decided to apply the old adage, and try doing it ourselves. We have volunteered to do a trivia contest for Chicon IV. If they do ask us to do it, it will be in Jeopardy style, as this allows us to make up horrible categories like "Great Barbecue Stories of SF" and other atrocities.

I have been looking for a new job (see solo) and sometimes I get the feeling that some places that look for jobs for you don't know much about computer science. One firm refused to believe that I had no hardware experience (they seem to think that using software on a machine will teach you the hardware), and I had never heard of Algol.

How long do you think it will be until there is a market for buttons that say "Don't blame me - I voted for Anderson"? Well, things may work out if someone can keep Ronnie from ad-libbing in the middle of addressing the UN or something...

Can anyone tell me if it is worth buying "Expanded Universe" if you already have the pieces that are in Destinies? I bought this last book in hc, and

about in his Scientific American article on the cube. It is useful in understanding the cube, but to anyone who feels that having the book should read phrases like "if you have explored the slice-squared group and the two generator group, you have doubtless found ways of switching any two edges or any two corners.." One way of solving the cube IS given, but by the time you understand HOW it works, you will be able to create a better one. You may not be able to find this book, but I suspect that other works will be published on the cube.

I can't match Doug's amazing weight loss, but I am slowly losing some weight myself. If I am lucky, I will see 200 pounds this year. It will be the first time since I was a high school freshman.

The "magic formula" for losing weight? It's very easy - EAT LESS AND EXERCISE MORE. Sorry about that...

Rip N.M.I. Farfel Well, Greg (all you other people will have to ask Mr. Ruffa why the answers to this strange name) it seems that I won't see you until Worldcon. It so happens that June 13 is the date of the wedding of Doris Kulfinski and Dave Johnston, and I will be somewhere down in southern Illinois instead of at X-Con. In July, I will be at ANOTHER wedding, this one for the "other" Mary.

I'm hardly surprised that you volunteered to be editor for an issue. In the first place, you are a large fraction the issue anyway, and in the second place, you have always had this strange suicidal urge to volunteer for things. At least you know who to blame when you find that you have too many things to do.

Call it what you will, you have the talent of explaining things. Keep it up.

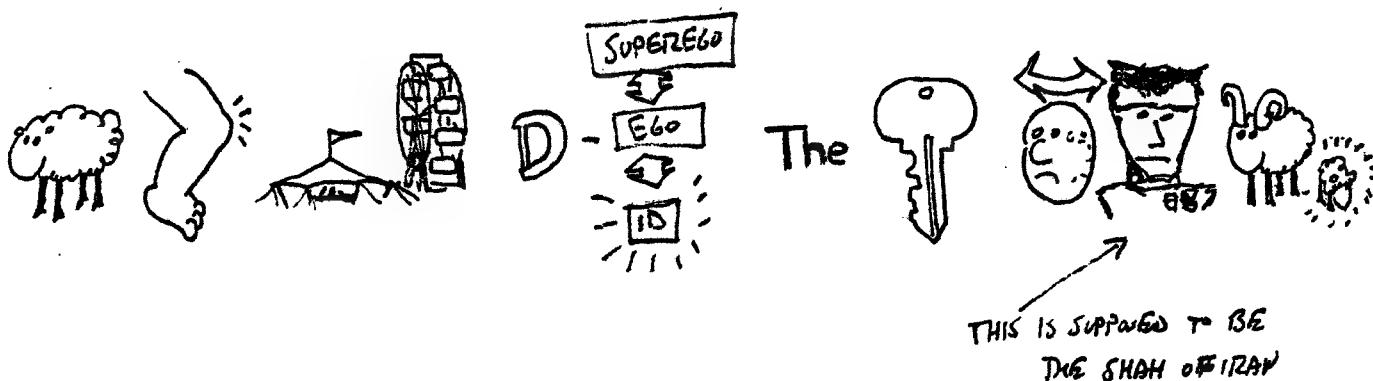
It was not worth it. Well, maybe I can make my money back after Heinlein dies. It is a first edition, after all. Heinlein has written some marvelous books, but I will no longer buy \$8.95 books by him without some people I trust giving me a recommendation or two. I don't care if he preaches, or says things that I don't agree with. But when he BORES me, I go somewhere else.

My next digression is - why is fandom white? I don't mean 100% - just 99% or so. Most cons I have been to could have been Klu Klux Klan meetings, except that they wear different kinds of funny costumes. I have no answers. Do you?

A random observation of mine has been not to try predicting more than two years into the future, because things are changing so quickly. What were you doing two years ago, and could you have predicted where you are today? Don't bet on it often.

ACROSTIC COMMENTARY ON GODEL, ESCHER, BACH

Joe : GEB is a book I feel that you should read.
 Shoe: Oh really? Why do you say so?
 Joe : Do you know how to get from MI to MU?
 Shoe: Explain yourself. Or must I BEG?
 Joe : Let's just say it's a meaningful little puzzle by Hofstadter.
 Shoe: Extremely provoking. And it's also about Bach?
 Joe : Strange loops bring us to him, also.
 Shoe: Curiouser and curiouser. But who is this Godel you speak of?
 Joe : How appropriate that you should use one of Carroll's phrases.
 Shoe: Escher was in that title also. How does he fit?
 Joe : Rather well, actually. It's all part of the grand schema.
 Shoe: But you haven't TOLD me anything about this book I'm to read.
 Joe : Actually, my hints have told you a lot.
 Shoe: Curses - I'm so curious that I'll have to buy it at once.
 Joe : Here's hoping you enjoy Hofstadter.



A Supplement to LASERGRAM #4 by David D. Levine at the above address and phone no.

Well, I had Lasergram #4 all text-processed and set to go when a flood of postmailings invaded my mailbox. I figured I had a few days left before deadline, so why not?

The title is a reflection of the book it's from. That's all I got out of that book. It's just a puzzle, a conundrum. It's James Joyce Goes to War. It's not SF. Why is it so popular among SF fans? About all I've gotten out of it was an explanation of where a few recent zine titles came from. I haven't finished it yet, and may not. For those who haven't yet figured it out, the book is Gravity's Rainbow.

Since compiling Lasergram #4 I've gone back to school and that's about it. My classes include Introduction to Electronic Music II and a course in SF taught by a professor I first met in the local SF club. He came with me to Windycon, so it's possible you met him. His name is David Elliott, he has gray hair and beard, he generally sports a beret, he walks with two canes, he's a professor of Systems Science & Mathematics, and he's an all-around interesting guy. The course looks like it'll be very interesting.

Anyway, on to the POSTMAILING COMMENTS:

MARTIAN MONOLOGUE: Trade Mars, indeed! Impoliteness in the huckster room in Windycon is a product of the same forces that put two dozen Han Solos into the costume contest (not to say that they were the ones being impolite in the huckster room). It was a big con which attracted a lot of junior high school kids and others who, although not mundanes, lacked knowledge of our peculiar fannish etiquette.

Battle of the Planets? Ugh. It looks like it might have been a bit better in the original, but not that much. Lupin III, on the other hand, is GREAT! I was part of a test-screening audience for the first feature film of his which is under consideration for American release (the one with the helicopter in the sewer, if that makes any sense to you). I also saw two others of his with English subtitles. The animation is fantastic. at its best it's like Tintin brought to life, and even at its worst it's no worse than Hanna-Barbera's best. If it hits release, see it, but don't pay more than \$3.00 unless you're an animation freak. Will it be at Capricon, anyone?

QUINTESENTIAL DUALITY: Oof. My mailman may have injured himself delivering it. Your cover reminds me of a song I learned long ago, which I'll not reproduce here because the tune is sort of important and I don't know what it's to the tune of. So why does he mention it here? Because without text processing it's easier to leave it in than waste Corflu to take it out!

QS cont'd: Are you attending as many East Coast cons as you are Midwest cons? If yes, how can you afford it, if no, wouldn't it be cheaper to? (although I am forced to admit I've been heading into the central Midwest when there are Southern cons that are closer...I appreciate wanting to travel farther to be with friends, but plane fare is soooo expensive!) I have caught the computer bug from my CS major roommate and may buy an Apple (sorry, Mike, but that looks like the best machine for my needs) this summer if I earn enough. If I can get a job. Next year I'll be living in an apartment with at least two and probably three other systems, and the owners thereof are already talking networking. Whether I get a system or not, I'll be bringing the printer (see Lasergram for description). I may also get a modem to tie the whole mess into TECHTERM or whatever they're calling it now. I need information, Mike.

Who is this mailing comment to, anyway, Mike or Greg?

Greg, I may need a room or a hunk of floor for myself and a couple of friends come Capricorn. I've probably talked to you about this already by the time you read this.

Now, what is this Maltman Avenue Not-a-Frisbee? Is that Jittlov's description? What did you do to bowl the Wizard over? What supplementary literature? Which film did you get? Is that Maltman Avenue as in "We're here on the corner of Maltman waiting for filmmaker Mike Jittlov..."? When do we get a chance to dissect it one frame at a time? I suppose all these questions will be answered at Capricorn.

At Windycon I decided little me couldn't eat \$11 worth of food even if stuffed to the point of bursting. There are disadvantages to being short.

I am, as I'm sure you know by now, a ~~trivia~~ trivia fan. I ran the X-Con '79 trivia contest and, in fact, wrote most of the questions myself (and it suffered because of this). I'd like to help out at Chicon. If you need help anywhere else, too...

I think we're in good hands with Hofstadter in charge of Mathematical Games or, rather, Metamagical Themas. Did you know that when you're not reading GEB its pages are all blank (at least, in the hardcover edition)?

General agreement with your comments on books.

Re HEGttG, I'm still waiting (impatiently) for those tapes to arrive from Mike. Mike? Why do you persist in invading my MC's to Greg?

Re yr CT Gretchen, has anybody ever done a Grog doll (as mentioned in The Handicapped)?

Re yr CT Tookie Tookie: As I think I've said previously, that was a protosun and not a galaxy at the end of TESB. This also explains the stars in "intergalactic" space. As to railguns: 1) the problems of dealing with plasmas may put them out of GT's reach for a while and 2) if you aim one of them things at my Vega, I'll flay you alive with an IR laser!

I really wanted a Pacer, but I couldn't talk the owner of the only used one I could find down to my price range. By the time I need a new car every Pacer ever made will be too old for me to want (with any luck). Oh, well.

Re science versus religion (and in this corner, wearing white, the heavy favorite, SCIENCE...) I always feel very uncomfortable when mysticism is being practiced. I once entered an SCA home where there was a huge pentagram nearly filling the floor of the main room. The people in the house considered it a good luck sign (I think) and "I don't believe in that kind of stuff," but nevertheless I clung to the wall and edged around it on my way in and out. I get a peculiar feeling in the pit of my stomach when Tarot cards are about and I feel like I'm being watched. Unrational fear of mysticism? Perhaps. I don't get this feeling from astrology, but that has been so cheapened by paperback books and daily newspaper columns it's practically mundane.

Whew. Now on to SHADOW MAILING COMMENTS.

COVER: What? Has Bill H. gotten a Street named after him?

SMITH'S CORONA: See Lasergram for diatribe on "alct". This is just a quirk of mine, I'm not usually such a stickler on grammar.

I'm on Sprint, but I don't know just what you mean by "hacking".

YOU ARE THE CLOWN OF CREATION: Is this title from later in Gravity's Rainbow than I've read yet?

I think Mike's (?) comment about the Big Bang arising from quantum leakage from a universe-sized black hole was meant to be that the Big Hole eventually "evaporated" (read: BANG!) due to such leakage. What does this say about the cyclic-vs.-expanding universe question?

A good explanation for a bad phenomenon: in SW Darth Vader felt in complete control of the situation and felt free to use his power as a carefully-tuned threat. By TESB he and the Empire have suffered major defeats at the hands of the rebels and show no signs of a victory soon. He is running a little bit scared and blames his failures on those around him. Also, in SW the Death Star was still not really on full alert status for most of the film, while in TESB Vader is in command of an active military craft and must maintain discipline. Nevertheless, his behavior makes him much less believable as a character (Darth Vader a believable character, do I hear you scoff?)

Re locks on lasers: I have one only on one of my two, I don't know if Tullio has one on his, and Mark was having one installed for the first time on his around Ishercon. Locks are virtually immaterial (except to make the BRH happy) if you have a plug to your belt power pack which can be easily pulled. If you leave your laser where someone who might be stopped by a lock can get at it without your consent you deserve what you get. Nevertheless they are a good idea, and all lasers should have them to be safe. (you do realize that, despite all locks, safety interlocks, beam interrupters, etc. ad nauseam we put on our lasers to make them officially "safe", they remain illegal in a strict sense because practically any laser powerful enough to put a visible spot on the wall is illegal to move about?)

In the past few days (since writing the above paragraph) I have strengthened my resolve to get a computer system for text processing. Looks like the best system for me is Apple II with 48k, dual disc drives, lowercase option, and WP software (which is available as low as \$75 and as high as \$500, or I or a friend or one of you techies could write one). Add a color TV to serve as a monitor (I need one anyway as the old TV is beginning to die) and I figure a price in the neighborhood of \$1700 to \$2k, although the only quote I've gotten so far was over \$3500. Comments and suggestions are encouraged.

WHITE RAREBIT SYNDROME: in which Alice falls down a hole full of melted cheese...

Much of fandom is theatre or theatrical. Costumes, techie gizmos (in fact, techie gizmos are occasionally referred to as "props" by some), makeup, film (viewing, critiquing, and making), con productions (Moebius Theatre, X-Con's plays, others?), even the way some fans live their lives (Master Thorbjorn from Madison is a good example) are all very theatrical. Theatre people, like fen, tend to be young (college age or so), creative, considered "weird" by mundane elements, as a group have non-conservative sexual habits (I know I'm setting myself up with that one), and as mentioned keep odd hours and modes of dress. Both also tend to be poor, and (for the same reasons) mobile. Both form their own little communities, somewhat limited in contact with the mundane world if not completely self-contained. They do indeed have a lot in common.

However, I have found that my theatre friends (which are many: I used to be a theatre major), even the ones who act fannish, don't read SF, don't understand fandom, and don't enjoy cons. On the other hand, fen function well in the theatre (given the skills required, of course). A quick look in the Info Handbook will verify this last.

Why is this? Fen probably work well in theatre because they are adaptable to odd hours and requirements, are used to the use of tools (words, lights, or what have you) to create atmosphere, and, being readers (as opposed to the rest of the population, who are literate but don't read: I refer you to Dr. A's fine article in Newsweek some time last year) have imaginations. The lack of SF interest among theatre people is less easily explained. Perhaps they live their fantasy lives while we read about them? An observation which may shed some light on the question (although it proposes no hypothesis to me) is that, while fen tended to be studious in high school (whether they got good grades or not), the theatre people tend to have a poor study/grades history. Fen were generally the "brainy oddball", theatre people were the "weird oddball". Here may lie the difference. Two similar sets of oddball behavior apparently arising from different under-lying sources? Parallel evolution? Further comments invited. The exploration of theatre people can help us understand fandom in the same way the exploration of Mars helps us understand the Earth.

By the way, I'm afraid Bill Higgins is not perfect. He is greater than the sum of his factors.

THE WORLD IS LIKE AN APA: in that large parts of it are several months behind. This being typed at 1 AM, Feb. 3, 1981. How long is that grace period?

Repeating an earlier comment, why does Titan's low temperature remove the possibility of life? What about completely non-terrestrial forms of life? I feel you are too pessimistic (so is Carl Sagan, on this point). The possibilities for life are infinite. Once life gets started (however unlikely) it will tend to continue and multiply, according to LEVINE'S DEFINITION OF LIFE: Life is that which actively avoids its own destruction. (I thought this out some years ago but this is the first time I've put it in print.) An implication of this is that life will tend to reproduce. Reproduction was not mentioned in the definition because it may not be obvious in the time scale available for the observation of the object under

question. The best test for a definition of life is whether it excludes fire but includes amoebas. End tirade (was that a tirade?).

"Fear and Loathing in/at (location)" is the title of several of Dr. Hunter S. Thompson's books. Hunter, as you may know, was the basis for Uncle Duke in the Doonesbury comic strip. The "Fear and Loathing" books are basically diaries of drug miasmas. The first sentence in Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas is something like "We were ten miles out of town on the Santa Fe Expressway when the drugs began to take hold."

DR. GONZO'S EGREGIOUS EFFLUVIA: What is the probability I can think up a title you've not used yet?

Weather here is variable. Last weekend it was in the 60's (farenheit, of course). T-shirts, Frisbees, green grass, and the like. This weekend it was down to about 20°F and a really bitter wind chill. Generally, though, if you take typical Chicago weather, lower the humidity, and raise the temperature about 10°, you'll get typical St. Louis winter, spring, and fall weather. In the summer, though, it is HOT! There were more deaths here this summer than anywhere else from the heat. T-shirts were sold that said "So who's afraid of Hell? I've spent the summer in St. Louis!"

ASIDE: Somebody pointed out that here at St. Louis' Washington University, I'm going to St. Louis WU. The only problem with that is that it's usually WU in St. Louis and not the other way around. Pity.

WU & FABRICANT: Who's Fabricant?

Two comments on your comments on COSMOS: I agree with your assesment that we are not Dr. Sagan's intended audience, and that we know much of what he's saying already. Videodisc. Bleah. They seem to be far more expensive (both player and discs) than they have any right to be, seeing how they're nonrenewable (as tape is) and you are limited to what They have to offer you. There already exists a fan videotape network (that's why we got Star Wars, Star Trek, and TESB at Ishercon.) There cannot be a fan videodisc network, unless it involves taping them at some point. The main point is that with tape you can give a friend a copy of a tape you have, but you must give away the videodisc and can keep nothing if you try that trick with disc. The best sort of thing would probably be a disc-swapping club, but that's not conducive to the building-up of nifty libraries.

By the way, the above copying scheme is quite illegal.

Local PBS stations often broadcast the Voyager programs as soon as they can schedule them, which can be months later. Keep an eye on the program listings.

Your Domsday TV could be tied in with cable by having a cable receiver at the owner's home rebroadcasting a scrambled signal over tight band to the portable unit. This involves tracking hardware, though. Otherwise, the broadcast power required to reach the owner's office is far too high.

No, only the Fnord itself is invisible. It merely causes you to skip to the next word and get a vague uneasy feeling.

Re yr CT's me: As I understand it, envelopes in Russia are all standard in sizes and color. Socialites' invitations these days already take the form of envelopes-within-envelopes-within-envelopes anyway, so why not stuff the fancy envelope with the torn edge into a standard envelope anyway? In any case, I was merely reporting on this phenomenon, and I don't think it would be accepted here in the Land Of The Free, God bless Mom and apple

pie! (note how the clever techie adopts a protective coloration under the Reagan administration.) ASIDE: Count the letters in Ronald Wilson Reagan. Six...six...six. Any Bible scholars out there remember the significance of that number?

STARDANCE: Hmm. How can you ban the firing of lasers in public and yet say that "they should be allowed in conventions"? Personally (speaking as a biased laser owner, of course) I feel that if you don't clown around with them lasers are safe. The reactions I've gotten from people (never mind the concons, I'm talking about the fans) have ranged from "COH, nifty, can I try it?" to "How much did that damn thing cost" to "Oh, another damn techie." Never has anyone said to me "Say, that's dangerous! You shouldn't be fooling around with that sort of thing!" or "If you shine that in my eyes I'll sue!". I have gotten numerous questions to the effect "Is that dangerous? Could you burn through a person with that?", to which my usual response is to shine it on my hand and say "No, but you wouldn't want to stare into the beam. It's like looking into the sun." I'd hate to think that all the work I've done on these damn things would only be seen by other techies (who've all seen them already anyway). The black one in particular is not too impressive until you see the beam (although, as you know, I'm working on a new case. Thanx for the help on that.)

One of these days we'll find out that there's such a thing as magnetic pollution, and anybody who's spent more than a few hours a week near a tape deck or turntable can kiss their pancreas good-bye. Did you know that white rats who smoke the equivalent of 2000 joints a day succumb to brain lesions? That rats who drink the equivalent of 3500 cans of diet soda succumb to bladder cancer? That rats who consume the equivalent of 1700 loaves of white bread succumb to bursting? Everything is dangerous if misused. There comes a point when we must take charge of our own lives and decide who to listen to among the cries of doom.

And now, the Commission to Prevent White Space presents:

SNEAKY REVIEWS: in which I turn the zine over to Roger and Gene.

ROGER: Thanks, Dave. I thought the new Buck Rogers was dreadful. The plots are insipid rip-offs of movies, other TV shows, even Sarek in The Legend Of Sleepy Hollow. Crichton is far from admirable, Twiki is obnoxious, and the special effects are poor even for a TV show of this lack of ambition. I think Larson has ripped the whole concept off from his own Galactica.

GENE: I'm afraid I have to disagree with you there, Roger. The new concept is nothing like Galactica, despite what the mundane reviewers say. The effects are really not all that bad. They're certainly as good as the old Star Trek was, and if they're not up to Galactica you must recall that that series had the highest budget ever, and was cancelled because of it. What I take objection to is the whole concept of Admiral Asimov. The part is also badly acted, as is Wilfrid Hyde-White's Dr. Goodfellow, a doddering old stereotype if I ever saw one. Hawk reminds me of Maya, and the promised character development of Buck and Wilma has come to naught. I agree with you that the plots are insipid rip-offs, and I think it won't last the season. Back to you, Dave.

Thanks, guys. Well, that's all for now. See you all in another two months. Same APA-time, same APA-channel!

David D. Levine

David D. Levine

Mundane Cares,

OR LASERGRAM * #5

David D. Levine

until mid-May: 6515 Wydown, Box 3480
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after that: 4210 N. Farwell Av.

Shorewood, WI 53211

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I'll be there until about August, aside from a week-end here or there.

TROUBLE ON THE POLITICAL FRONT

I was going to write the usual snappy, up-to-the-minute, chock-full-of-mailing-comments, long lasergram up until noon today. Now I don't know if I'll even get around to the matter (I have done a lot of things lately, but they'll wait until nextish if neccessary). My supplemental zine Ewe Knee-Fair D-Id the Key-No-Shah Kid will satisfy you MC freaks for a while, and as far as cartoons go I put in enough work on the cover to pay my dues for a while. (Isn't it on this issue? Well, you'll see it eventually.) However, I have some serious talking to do and I don't know how long it'll take to say it.

They shot Reagan today. And I'm hoping the sonofabitch dies. And I'm wondering why.

At this writing he has just come out of surgery with a good prognosis. Naturally, as soon as the news of the shooting came through conversations turned to things political. I stated that I didn't care about him, since he probably wouldn't care about me if I died fighting in El Salvador. (I know this is a callous attitude. Part of the reason I'm writing this is to figure out why I feel this way.) This naturally lead one of my more conservative friends to defend present US Carribean policy. He maintained that our intervention was helping to prevent and would in the future prevent needless death under cruel regimes and/orterrorists. I replied that war was far more devastating than any such, but it was pointed out that war was already raging there. I queried whether sending in American men and arms would alleviate or exacerbate war conditions. The response was that if we didn't support the governemnt Castro would expand his power base. I said that no ideological differences were worth dying for. It was argued (this was a group thing by now) that Castro was to be stopped for being a murderer and not for being a Communist. I wonder whether war is justified even to stop mass murder?

The conversation now turned to nuclear war. I turned it. I expressed worry that conflict in the Carribean might lead to nuclear war with the USSR, and that even a "limited" nuclear war would mean the eventual death of Man as a species. In this group, I'm pleased to say, nobody disagreed with that point. However, the likelihood of war with the USSR was deemed remote. I argued that any conflict could escalate into nuclear war, and we should allow such cuntries as Viet Nam and El Salvador to fall into Soviet hands if need be in order to avoid such conflicts. Pretty untenable, I agree, but the alternative is to assume the

Russians won't attack for this much of a pinch but might for that much. I feel we're too close to the brink to do any pinching. This should serve to bring you up to where I want to talk. The conversation went on to various topics including the imminent collapse of the Russian economy, the proposed blockade of Cuba, and solar power and the space budget.

What has this to do with Reagan being shot? I feel he is pushing us to the brink of war with his foreign policy. He appointed a general as his Secretary of State (never mind that "he won't have any input into foreign policy", he appointed an old, Red-fearing, conservative general to carry our foreign policy to the rest of the world. This is WRONG!), his promise to abolish draft registration has quietly evaporated, his proposed budget cuts everything I think is important for a government in favor of the military (Defense, they call it. Ha!) and his fiscal policy is based on an economic theory which was effectively disproved by the Depression. He apparently expects the economy to recover by withholding money for Federal programs which employ hundreds of thousands, unemployment to drop under a federal hiring freeze, and "America to become great again" by taking away money from R&D while we fall further and further technologically behind such countries as Japan and West Germany. Even technologically-inept Russia is catching up to us in space and computers. All this will, in my (admittedly unprofessional and quite likely wrong-headed) opinion, weaken our economy enough to persuade the Russians that perhaps they could win a nuclear war with us. The way to beat the Red Menace is in the laboratory, the shop, and in space, not with more and bigger missiles and battleships.

I abhor war. No war is justified. I realize that even unjustified wars must sometimes be fought, in self-defense, for example. Here is the crux of my confusion. What I would really like to say is that surrender is preferable to fighting if there would be fewer lives (on both sides) lost. Dishonor before death, as it were. I know, though, that atrocities are committed and that there are some forces against which weapons must be taken up, Hitler for example.

My real problem is that I do not understand the people who make foreign policy on both sides. I don't know what they consider just cause for war. In today's society, where a war could destroy the planet as an inhabitable ecology, I fear all war because I don't know how easily it could escalate to that stage. I do what I can to oppose war in debates among friends and by opposing the draft. I registered for the draft because, like Socrates, I believe that to disobey law is to destroy society. This decision was very difficult for me, and it was Socrates' example that led me to do it. However, I will not be a soldier. I would go to the peace corps or, if necessary, to jail before I would kill another man in war. This is not to say I wouldn't kill in self-defense, or that if I was somehow forced into such a situation I wouldn't shoot back to save myself. But I will do anything possible to prevent myself from getting into such a situation. I believe Reagan's foreign and domestic policies are pushing us toward a conflict where battle is inevitable. I realize that I do not fully understand the forces that do this, or even Reagan's policies, fully. Nevertheless, this is the impression I am getting and it scares me.

So why am I writing about this in APA-Tech? Several reasons. I want to put my views out for public debate to help me straighten my opinions out, and this is a forum where I know it'll be read and receive honest, thoughtful replies. Simply putting my thoughts on paper helps me straighten them out. For one thing, I see some gaping holes in the logic of some of my arguments now, but I must think about how to fill them without contradicting my basic beliefs. Should, for example, war be waged against a madman who is killing thousands, say Idi Amin? How do you prevent war in a world full of other countries who don't value peace nearly as much as you do? What should you do if the option is to let the USSR gather power bit by bit until it feels it is strong enough to win and launches a nuclear war, or to fight every advance, eventually escalating tensions to the point where war is inevitable? Under this model nuclear war seems inescapable, but one must progress to nuclear conflict more slowly than the other, or there is a hole in the model?

The most practical, immediate, and frightening reason is this: I believe that if Reagan's policies continue to be implemented there will be a war and/or a draft within the next few years. I am of draft age. By setting down my views here I am attempting to justify (to myself and to others) my claim to be a conscientious objector. This is not just selfish. If the rolls of CO's swell as the new cold war escalates, perhaps even the government will see that the will of the people is against war. By setting out my views here, I want to raise questions in your mind and cause debate among your friends and you. Is war really necessary? Do you want to support your government with your life or the life of your loved ones? These issues trouble me, and if enough people are troubled we may find answers as a nation. If you'd like information, or are considering declaring yourself a CO, write the Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors:

CCCCO
POB 15796
Philadelphia, PA 19103
tel. (215) 545-4626

I realize there are holes in my logic. I realize that I sound like Jeff Duntemann. But these issues are important to me, and I think it's important that we all think about them.

Setting these thoughts down on paper has helped immensely. (that "paper" was a typo but I think I'll leave it in.) I would like to go on with the usual APA stuff, but it's getting close to deadline and I don't see any chance to work on this at any time in the coming week. I'll be back in two months with something a bit more cheery, and gobs of mailing comments, con reports, and all the usual crap you've come to expect from me.

don't get depressed,

David D. Levine
David D. Levine

P. S. I've gotten a hold of a Rubik's Cube! Rolf, can you get me a copy of that book and mail it to me?

And now, the SPWS (Society for the Prevention of White Space) presents for your edification and amusement:

FILM FLAM AND LOOKS AT BOOKS!

SCANNERS: Four words suffice. Scanners Die In Vain. Don't see it, despite its excellent premise and the presence of Patrick McGoochan of Prisoner fame. Although the film's visual design is quite nice, the script is pedestrian, the plot becomes incoherent after a strong start, there are some terrible technical errors (mostly having to do with computers), and, above all, it's just plain GROSS! The gory effects are done with a maximum of blood and calculated to evoke disgust in the most jaded viewer. The blood goes "pssht" in slow motion and everything. Much of the acting is comatose, the dialogue is unbelievable, the director seems to be obsessed with guns, and the Scanners' abilities are poorly defined. All in all one of the most disappointing films I've ever seen. Not the worst, just that I'd expected much more from interviews and such.

FADE TO BLACK: Film fans will enjoy this one. Brilliantly acted, it is the story of a Hollywood kid gone wrong, a weak person driven to murderous film fantasy. I would recommend it.

ON THE HORIZON are two films that promise to be good. SUPERMAN II looks like more fun than the last one, with midair battles and other nifty special effects. OUTLAND should be every bit as good as ALIEN, from what I've seen and read about it. GALAXINA, on the other hand, looks worthless.

BILLION YEAR SPREE: Brian W. Aldiss' well-researched, if somewhat opinionated, history of SF is the textbook for the SF course I'm taking now. Although I disagree with some of his opinions about authors, it is a useful document of where we've been on the road to SF. Another good source for SF history is Algys Budrys' article in Triquarterly magazine, #49. This is an all-SF issue of this otherwise staid literary magazine and might be worth picking up.

GOLEM¹⁰⁰ by Alfred Bester: I liked it at first, but it slid downhill after about the middle. Contains most of the features, good and bad, of The Computer Connedtion. The characters, although well-developed, are not the sort of people I would like to read about. They are freakish, full of quirks, and bizarre. The action, beginning comparatively normally, drifts into an ill-defined netherworld of illogic. There is lots of gratuitous sex and violence, often boringly repetitive. However, I liked it a lot for about the first three-quarters. Perhaps my suspension of disbelief needs new shock absorbers. Some of you may enjoy it.

TIME TRAVELERS STRICTLY CASH by Spider Robinson: Read it! This second volume of Callahan's Crosstime Saloon stories and other fiction, plus non-fiction, is uproarious, informative, entertaining and quite well-written. It might help to read Callahan's Crosstime Saloon first if you haven't yet, but it's not necessary. Some of the most atrocious puns and shaggy-dog stories ever to appear in print are here, along with some excellent reviews, an article on Heinlein, and a perceptive speech on Fandom (Spider Robinson's Minicon speech).

Opinionated, aren't I?

Life in the Northern Wasteland

On the serene, happy existence of a small tribe of techish fandom living in a frontier colony far beyond the Chicago border.

As chronicled by Guy Wicker for Apa-Tech #12.
I am presently not living at R.R. 1 box 223, Calumet Mich. 49913, but all my mail gets sent there anyway.

I am now one term closer to fulfilling my sentence at Houghton. Being back at school is a real contrast to pretending to be an engineer while co-oping. My first order of business was to add all the courses I wanted to those I'm required to take for graduation. Next, get involved in a lot of extra-curricular activities. Then sit back and watch my work load per day exponentially rise to infinity. Being a member of the Permanent Floating Riot Club tends to take up a lot of free time. It requires at least four evenings of watching or showing S.F. movies, discussing plans for U.F.O. building contests, and goofing off. Just one more year of all this and I can take it easy at grad school. Stanford, Princeton, Berkely, and M.I.T. are at the top of my list. I wonder if I'll be at the top of theirs?

We finally got a complete set of all 12 Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy episodes here. I thought the first six were fantastic whereas the second six were merely excellent. Was Douglas Adams rushed into getting the second six out? Has he lost enthusiasm for the project? Or did I begin losing enthusiasm after listening to six whole hours of tape?

Many G. T. Houghtonites (and a few non-G. T. as well) are passing their time (and a special E. E. course) attempting to design and build a sophisticated, all digital synthesizer. Several are on the market now but they all have severe design compromises since digital logic is not yet fast enough to do really complex stuff in real time. We are discovering that this is true. But, undaunted by the harsh realities imposed upon us by the junction capacitance of B.J.T.'s, we are determined to design a digital system so versatile that analog music synthesis will become history. Our only concern is that before we're done Intel will probably have a chip that does what we're attempting.

The annual MTU egg dropping contest is coming up in May and all the good tech toots are dusting off their aerodynamics textbooks. The rules are simple. You build a container out of cardboard, string, and glue, able to fit in a 10" cube. An egg is placed inside and it is dropped from a 14 story building onto the pavement below. Owners of intact eggs receive \$50. As I understand it, the secret is to maximize the tumbling of the container thus using up most of the energy rotationally. One student last contest had a 10" cube of liquid glue in a cardboard container. The egg survived the initial impact but all the glue splashed out, the egg went with it, and cracked six feet away. I've been thinking of going to our farm, finding a chicken about to lay, and scaring it for about 10 minutes.

This causes the hen to secrete more shell material and the resulting egg can't be cracked with a hammer.

Wargaming has become a primary pastime of the P.F.R.C. this year. As far as I know, the only two members not affected are Todd and Cap'n Al, who won't have anything to do with the rest of us. I'm in the process of modifying the rules for the game "Traveller". In it, you're a citizen of a Star Wars like Imperium and you go out in search of fortunes and high technology (indistinguishable from D & D magic). I'm trying to make a consistent progression of physics that allows for the present game to be played more or less as it is, but will allow for more freedom and variety in the rules and the equipment available.

LASER ACQUISITION DEPARTMENT:

A lot of General Technics has been looking for laser tubes for quite some time now so I called Spectra Physics to inquire about purchasing large quantities of tubes last summer. their response was \$29 for 2 mW HeNes but BRH certification was necessary. Thanks to some extensive researching by Mary Lynn, we have the information we need about the BRH. I just called to make an order for 20 tubes but the lowest price they'd quote me was \$155. If anyone knows of anywhere that tubes can be gotten for under \$50, I presently have 15+ orders people want filled. Al Duester still has a bunch of 12 V laser supplies he's selling for \$20 apiece.

I've been hearing rumors that Chris and Cecile will be moving down to Chicago from a lot of Chicagoans. Living in the same apartment with them, I do see them occasionally and I decided to ask them and clear up the rumor. They said June. They still seem a little apprehensive about leaving their jobs without much money saved and looking for work in the city, but if they have enough to get by for a couple of months by summer, they'll be goin' south. Now You have another rumor to spread Bill.

Mailing comments:

Bill H. - Thanks for the details on the New Scientist article. I tried to find a copy of it here but noone subscribes. I showed it to the head of our metalurgy department and he suspects that since it was tested at 2.5 GPa, it is produced at that pressure. This means the crystal structure isn't likely to be stable at standard pressure and the material could deteriorate rapidly. He's going to contact some friends at the Patterson Research dept. and get some more information on it.

Its interesting to hear that Fermilab will soon be going into the antimatter manufacturing business. How are they planning on storing it? Will they keep it spinning in a magnetic field or have they found a way to bottle antihydrogen?

Dave L. - A good source of synthesizer chips is Al Duester. He's spent a lot of time and money on obtaining analog music synthesis chips but he's scrapping it all for an all digital system. He's been trying to unload his stock on the rest of us digital music fans but he hasn't had any luck. I think He'd be pleased to help you out.

Package Tours on the Egger Route #4: Through the Pulmonary Tract with Gun and Camera

* This 'zine is being produced for APA-Tech by Gretchen *
* Van Dorn, 7619 W. Clarence Ave., Chicago, IL, (312)763- *
* 1376. It is a product of the Rhetorical Punchline Press. *

Mr. Roper complained last trip that I didn't have enough "original text." Rather than accusing me of plagiarism as I first thought, he was merely requesting copy that was not mailing comments. OK, fella, no mailing comments in this issue. (The big challenge is going to be taking the mailing comments that I already have written and make them into "original text" and still make sense.)

Well, you techies out there, how does an electric typewriter work? What is it that the motor does, aside from making a gawd-awful racket? Why can I have a power space/dash/X on this one and not on a manual? Why is there a control that makes it harder to push the keys? And, finally, what the heck is TAB (set and clear)?

Thoughts on the language debate: Keith said something about "femfan" in #10 (I think. I lose track of the numbers.). He is not taking into account the fact that the word came into being at a time when fandom was heavily male. People being the way they are, we always have to label groups. The group "We" belong to generally gets the generic title, "Us," while everyone else gets a descriptive name. If the nomenclature developed when females numerically dominated fandom, "himfan" might be in usage. (Hefan? Manfan?)

Another thought, this time chairman/person. Since the dictionary lists the pronunciation châr'men and defines it as "one who presides," why not spell it chairmin and keep the pronunciation? It is much less awkward than chairperson and not as ambiguous as "the chair."

CONFORMITY (We were talking about that, too.)

The business world has no monopoly. In college we lived down the street from some sorority houses. On the bus one day I saw one of the most painful cases of mindless conformity I have ever seen.

Five girls got on in front of the Tri-Sig House. They all wore jeans, pastel ski-jackets of a similar cut, blonde hair (razor-cut in the same style) and the same shade of blue eye-shadow, the VERY SAME SHADE. I never had much respect for sorority girls, but this killed any I had left. (Word-processor's note: Gretchen's original writing read "blur eye shadow." I'm sure she meant blue, but, from what I know of sorority girls and their all-night drinking sprees, blur eye shadowing is not only funny, it's appropriate. DVD)

By the same token, how many guys have you seen at cons wearing tatty jeans, T-shirts, long hair, beards and leather cowboy hats?

Since I can't make mailing comments, I have to make a public statement. I like Rod Smith's accent. Accents make the spoken word interesting and give the language texture.

In former issues, people have talked in depth about the music they listen to as they write. Being a former vidkid, I must confess that I am not heavily into music. I have little or no experience with the album-oriented music spoken of here.

Most of my musical experience has lain with the musical theater and AM radio. As a matter of fact I am writing this to the accompaniment of WCFL, an AM station that now plays pop/rock music from the fifties on. (The poor station has been through three formats in the past two years. I think they will stay with this one.)

Right now they are "doing" 1963, a year that produced several memorable songs. I enjoy this sort of music a great deal for several reasons. Primarily, I suppose, because it reminds me of a happier, more carefree time of life.

Another point in its favor is the vocal harmony that seems quite rare in today's songs. My favorites are The Association and The Beach Boys because of their mastery of harmony.

It would almost seem that, as the years go by, music, at least popular music, is becoming less mature. We are now left with something that has little else than a beat and some sophomoric, shouted lyrics.

The music of the fifties and the sixties also had a sort of innocence that is gone today, not just an innocence of lyric and theme but also one of music and form. Today's music seems rougher of texture somehow.

Country and Western music is distressing in that it often has harmony and a smoothness of texture but the lyrics all seem to be about how everyone is sleeping with everyone else but their spouse, and nobody, but nobody is happy as they are.

1963 is over and they're playing requests. Anyone have any good theories as to what the words to American Pie mean?

Last trip Keith threw out for discussion the statement "Fandom is just a copout from reality." Well, I'm going to discuss it. "So what?" What is so great about "reality" that it is "wrong" for us to want to find an alternative?

Besides, what is reality in the first place? Fandom is a group of people that enjoys many of the same things and collects to interact regarding these things. How is this so different from Joe Mundane's Friday night bowling league or Susie Church-Social's liturgy committee?

Reality is what you make of it. Sure there are fans out there who spend eight years in college and never get their BA. And some of us get one and spend their time clerking in a store. There are just as many regular people doing the same thing.

"TV IS JUST A COPOUT FROM REALITY." "GRADUATE SCHOOL IS JUST A COPOUT FROM REALITY." "FIGURE SKATING IS JUST A COPOUT FROM REALITY." "QUITTING YOUR JOB, MOVING TO OREGON AND GROWING HERBS IS JUST A COPOUT FROM REALITY."

The same thing can be said for any interest or occupation that takes up a substantial part of your life.

On to the second part of this contention.

Keith, perhaps, works and lives among educated and interesting people. (In California??!--DVD) I don't. I don't consider myself a social misfit because that implies a desire to "fit in." I am proud to say that I have more going on in my mind than going out drinking, meeting guys, getting laid, watching television, buying clothes and reading my newspaper horoscope. The above are the major topics of conversation among the young women with whom I work now and went to school with previously.

The people who can't operate in the real world usually can't operate in fandom. We all know the type; too loud, or too quiet, or just plain too strange, so that the rest of us tend to shy away.

Many of us used fandom as a school or laboratory to develop our social skills. The trick was that we had people that we could feel comfortable with, who we shared interests with. A common ground gives one a level place to start from.

Put Joe Mundane in with a bunch of people he doesn't know and don't bowl and he'll feel just as awkward and "out of it" as Keith seems to with his neighbors and co-workers.

Some people seem to make it no matter what, and some never do. Most of us need a little help. I found that help within the familiar framework of fandom. I refuse to believe that my "familiar" is less worthy than any other.

REALLY CLEVER IDEA DEPT: Our branch library has recently replaced its nice, familiar, accessible card catalog with a microfilm reader. This may sound very innovative and techish, but it reduces the number of people who can look something up at any one time to two (A-L and M-Z). When some teenybopper has to do a report for school and takes twenty minutes to copy down every entry under a subject heading, it limits the time I can spend looking for my subject heading. I finally gave up waiting and wandered the stacks in a search for what I wanted. I found a lot of good books that way, but not the ones I set out to find.

On the subject of libraries, nothing makes me yearn for the suburbs like the Carl B. Roden Branch of the Chicago Public Library.

They only poorer library I have ever seen is the Oriole Park Branch that is housed in a remodeled gas station in a shopping center.

On top of the card-catalog problem lies the fact that most of the books they have are pre-1960. And, somehow or another, whenever I do find a book in the catalog I can never find it on the shelves. This is a problem for me in several subjects. (Tonight I was looking for books on dance. Anyone out there know the Dewey or LOC code for this subject?)

WHY DANCE? DEPT: Doug has gone below 200 lbs. for the first time in about five years. He looks great. His triumph has caused me to look at myself, and I don't like what I see. I weigh too damn much. I counted, and found that I have 26 weeks between here and the Worldcon. It is reasonable that someone applying themselves dilligently could lose 35 lbs. by then. I'm going to try. If I am my same tubby self in Denver I would be grateful if any of you who see me there would yell at me.

(Oh, yes. I wanted the dance books to help me map out the exercise program I'm adding to the rabbit food diet.)

It occurs to me that we won't have the membership ~~problem~~ situation that Greg extrapolated. Even if everybody on Earth is on the roster, if things run as they have, nobody will contribute to every issue.

MARCON: It was in March this year. Doug and I decided to defy the Marcon Duntemann exclusion principle (two Duntemanns by blood cannot occupy the same Marcon at the same time) and attend.

We set out Friday morning (well, more like noontime) in Roper's Delta 88, costarring Bill Higgins and a box of Amy Joy donuts, Special Guest Star Neil Rest.

I got to sit on the drive shaft hump in the back seat by virtue of having short legs. The guitar, having shorter legs than I, got to sit on the transmission hump. Thank Ghod for short-legged guitars.

Three adults cannot occupy the back seat of that car and remain aloof. In order to be comfortable we had to be friendly. Aside: I suspect the tendency of fans to be "touchers" comes from such enforced contact. After a while you develop a liking for it. In the same way, the back rubbing stems from trying to ease all the kinks and cramps gained in these situations.

Another aside: A few words on comfy men. We live in a society that worships thinness. This can and has messed up the personal images of a lot of people. Yet while being badly overweight may not be healthy, there is a lot to be said for a bit of padding. Neil Rest, while an interesting and entertaining traveling companion, is bony. Roper, on the other hand, is quite comfy. (Bill Higgins accused me of having a bony shoulder. I find this hard to believe.) Doug is comfy, too, but he was driving.

Marcon this year had an incredible concentration of techies. We counted 34 but may have missed some. We had our traditional GT swim on Saturday, even if most of the group showed up an hour and

a half late due to an expedition to the French Market. The pool was nice, comfortably warm and a bit shallow. I know some people would have liked something deeper for diving, but it was a great comfort to me to be able to stand on the bottom at any point in the pool and have at least the top of my head out of the water.

The jacuzzi, on the other hand, was a trifle too hot. I couldn't take it for more than 15 minutes or so.

A good chunk of the time was spent sitting around in the water discussing holding the Worldcon on an oil tanker or an aircraft carrier. It was decided that a cruise ship just wouldn't make it. (Love Boat in '85?)

The techie party Saturday night lacked some of the umph of former years. Jeff and I regaled Valli and anyone else who wanted to listen with the origins of Thursday nights in Chicago and our first trip to a Worldcon. Steve Johnson told a few Phil Foglio stories. Marty made some sound effects. George Ewing and Jeff Tolliver took a lot of self-referential photographs. I went "home" when the salami pizza that I had had for dinner started backing up on me.

Sunday morning's techie panel was different from the usual "How we got started and who we are" speeches of former years, but it lacked control. We never did decide if government by corporation is any better than government by government.

Saying goodbye and leaving for home were about the same as most cons, but just outside Indiana we encountered the Gerald Corricar and the Champagne Van. We convoyed for a while and stopped for dinner together. At this point we traded Neil to the Corricar for Bill Leininger (and a player to be named later--DVD). It made the routes through the city less complicated for both cars.

The conversation was delightful and Higgins played his uke. It was a fine way to stretch out a con, even if I could hardly sit down at all on Monday. That drive shaft hump was hard.

a

REVIEW!!!

A couple of weeks ago I managed to see The Devil and Max Devlin, a fantasy put out by Disney, but singularly un-Disney. It concerned a regular kind of guy (neither rapist nor saint) who gets tripped by a little old blind lady and falls under a bus full of Hare-Krishna. He ends up in Hell greeted by a Devil, Bill Cosby, and is brought before the "the board of directors."

It seems they are having recruitment problems down there. They strike a bargain with Max; he can have the rest of his life back if, in a two-month period, he can sign three clean, unsullied souls. (They are specified.) He agrees, and comes to life, much to the delight of the Hare-Krishnas. To help him out he is endowed with certain special powers.

The clean souls he is after are a nerdy kid who wants to be a motocross rider, a girl who wants to sing and a kid who wants someone to marry his pretty, blonde mother.

Well, when Max is with them, Nerd Nortlinger becomes invincible on a bike, Stella Summer can sing like Barbra Streisand

(and is an overnight success) and he doesn't need much prompting to fall in love with the pretty blonde mother.

Virtue triumphs in the end, as we knew it would, and everyone is happy except Bill Cosby, but it isn't sugary as I had feared. Valli pointed out some almost subliminal reinforcement of the family ideal, but what's wrong with that? It wasn't a "children's movie," but there's no reason why you couldn't take them.

Some of the scenes of Hell looked to be outtakes from the ending of Black Hole, but they fit better here.

All around, it was a good time.

Well, I put it off for as long as I can, but I'm going to jump into THE GREAT LOVE DISSERTATION.

I have noticed something. A lot of this argument is the same ideas in different words. We talk about different kinds of love, and different levels of love, and do they exist or don't they, and it all starts to sound the same except that my way of saying it is right and yours isn't.

It's my turn to be the-only-one-who-is-right-even-though-I-am-saying-the-same-thing-as-everyone-else.

I encounter a problem because I would like to use actual examples here, but I am afraid that using names would embarrass some people.

My basic premise here is that "Love" is communication. As there are several different kinds and levels of communication, there are several kinds and levels of love.

Starting at the top: I love Doug. We communicate comfortably, and naturally, in several ways. Physically we are well in tune, intellectually we have many of the same interests, emotionally I am not afraid to show him what I feel. It goes on and on. This is what I call married love. It is going to last because it has its roots in so many different kinds of soil (if you forgive me the metaphor). I knew that our marriage was going to be a success when we had lived together for a whole school year and were still speaking. He was the first roommate that I could make that claim for.

Next level: There are people, whom I won't name so as not to embarrass them (or myself) who I can talk to on a deep intellectual and emotional level. I would say that I love them. I wouldn't, however, say that I could live with them or that I could have a satisfying physical relationship with them. (As a matter of fact, some of them are female.)

On a third level, there are people out there who (now how can I put this delicately?) communicate with me on a physical level. (How's that for a delicate way of saying sex?) I might "love" these people in the way that society accepts the term now, but any such relationships leave me feeling unsatisfied and wanting something more. (As Woody Allen put it in Love and Death, "Sex without love is an empty experience, but as empty experiences go, it's one of the best.") This sort of love is hard pressed to survive separations.

Other words that I will throw in to cloud the issue are truth and commitment. Keeping secrets from a lover? I am not someone who believes that TRUTH is an absolute good. I feel no compunction

in bending it to my ends if I feel the cause is good and the bending hurts no one, but on the occasions I have kept things from Doug, I have been very uncomfortable. So uncomfortable, in fact, that such secrets never stayed secrets for long. If I couldn't go to him with my problems, I don't think there is anyone I could go to. So much for truth.

Committment comes in because it ain't all fun 'n games. It does take work to keep the show on the road. The love part comes in because we want to go to all the trouble to put up with the other's insecurities, fears, mad enthusiasms, obsessions, dreams, partridges in pear trees and dig through all the garbage for the good stuff. (I have occasionally wished that I wasn't married. I have never wished that I wasn't married to Doug.)

Sustaining a relationship takes more than just grit. There is a sort of gut-level understanding of the other's feelings that one has to develop. You have to know the time and the place for things. Donna brought up the question of telling a present love all about the good times shared with a former love. That sort of thing can be very damaging at the wrong time, like during a fight or disagreement, but it doesn't have to be. Comparisons can serve as a barometer of how things are going. (I, at least, was very curious about Doug's past relationships.) As a matter of fact, a relationship that is damaged by such references may not be viable.

A good part of loving someone is that you want the best for them. There is an old cliché about loving someone enough to let them go. In some cases this isn't as dumb as it sounds. There can be destructive relationships and sometimes the best place to get is out.

Growth is a big part of love. Helping each other to grow and discover new interests and feelings is the most important part of a relationship. Being open to new things and being open to loving another are very similar feelings.

Sometimes I look at Doug and I think about how much we have in common. I have realized, however, that a good chunk of it wasn't "in common" until we knew each other and had a chance to share enthusiasms. This is not to say that the seeds of those enthusiasms weren't there in the first place, but they lay on the stony path and had no chance to grow.

Yes, friends can do that for you, too, but I already said that friendships can be love relationships, too. It's all a matter of kind and level.

People can grow apart. Love can end. Endings can be damn painful, but it is best to let go before what has gone before is spoiled with bitterness. Hanging on too long is as tragic as giving up too soon.

I have occasionally wondered if there are people out there who aren't capable of loving. It is a situation of giving and taking. You have to be able to do both. I have known people who don't seem to be able to handle the give and take, but our acquaintances have been short and not very close, so I might not have had a suitable basis for observation.

I don't go along with the contention that in order to love someone else you must love yourself first. That is a terribly difficult thing to do. So many people who I know have so many doubts and fears about themselves that they truly wonder if they ever can love themselves, yet they do love and are loved by others.

I more than half suspect that it goes the other way around, that you can't love yourself until you can open yourself to loving and the love of others.

Did I sound pompous enough? Have I covered everything? Maybe next time I'll dissertate on The American Ways of Birth and Death and What's Wrong With Them or Fashion: Looking and Acting Like Ugly Sheep.

Last Word: Another fannish feud bites the dust. Jamie and I have sorted ourselves out. We still may not agree, but we have decided that that is no reason not to be friends.

Well, in rough form, I have about nine pages. It should condense down some when Doug types up the good copy (she says as I'm finishing after 7½ pages--DVD), but it's still plenty. I'll sign off now, see you all next trip.

GHD

p.s.--And, Roper, I'm expecting a nice fat mailing comment.

Hastily Scrawled Post Script:

(Disclaimer: This is not a mailing comment
I found out on the phone.)

Jamie - Let me be the first to congratulate you.

Good Luck & Much Happiness!

GHD.

THE LUNATIC
IS IN MY HEAD

[illegible]

SPEAKING OF MY MEDIUM: This is probably a little harder to read than Gretchen's (which was typed up just a few minutes ago) because I just changed the ribbon and this 'zine is soaking up all the excess ink. Sorry about that, but, as you can tell from Gretchen's aforementioned 'zine, the old ribbon was getting too threadbare to continue on.

MY PASSION: No, put your eyeballs back in your head, I'm not talking about sex. It is now April 7, and the shuttle is set for launch in less than three days. This will be the last pre-launch shuttle report in this series of 'zines.

Most of the technical bugs seem to have been smoothed over by now, and the biggest problem looming now is the weather. According to the standard alarmist rantings of Jules Bergman, there is only a one in eight chance of the weather permitting a launch on any given day. The weather constraints on this first flight are extremely tight; the winds, in particular, have to be so benign that if the same standards were applied to commercial airlines, 90 per cent of the planes would be grounded at all times.

In addition, there must be less than 30 per cent cloud cover; the Skylab incident taught NASA once and for all that when you launch a new configuration for the first time, you should have photo coverage of the ascent for as long as possible. If there had been visual coverage of Skylab through its first two minutes of launch, there would have been no need to reconstruct what had happened when its skin peeled off. They would have known.

So I went and arranged to have Friday morning off, and there's a good chance the launch won't come off then, anyway. Such is life.

However, the weather constraints aren't the only ones that are stricter for this first flight. The shuttle was designed to be able to make orbit despite any number of degraded systems. For this flight, everything must be working perfectly for orbital commitment. A slight underpressure in one of the main engines, loss of one of the auxiliary power units, loss of one of the five redundant computers--any of these will result in an abort.

The most likely abort to occur is the RLS, or return to launch site, abort. Listen for that phrase while watching any shuttle launch. RLS means, simply, turning 180 degrees and heading back to the Cape. It's the most demanding profile the shuttle can be put through, and mission commander John Young is determined not to do it. But, if ordered, he will. This would result in the shortest American manned space flight since Virgil Grissom's sub-orbital Mercury flight--about 20 minutes from liftoff to landing.

Once in orbit (if they make it that far--the chances of an RLS abort are about 20 per cent), the payload bay doors must open properly without any binding. To do so, the auxiliary power units must work properly (they provide the hydraulic power to operate the bay doors, the control surfaces and the landing gear). Then they must shut properly--a misalignment of less than $\frac{1}{4}$ inch could result in the loss of the vehicle during re-entry.

If all this has worked out properly, Young and his pilot, Bob Crippen, will spend two days putting the shuttle through its paces--changing orbits, maneuvering to proper attitudes, testing its orbital handling characteristics.

Then comes the real hairy part--re-entry. Entering the atmosphere. Constantly checking the orbiter's energy state against predicted values, braking more with sharper turns if there is too much energy, diving harder if there's not enough. Going subsonic only after passing over the runway at the Rogers Dry Lake Bed while heading into final approach--all without any power at all. Trusting that landing gear doors that have been cold-soaked for two days and then subjected to 5,000 degrees of re-entry heat will, in fact, open up smoothly when they are deployed a couple of hundred feet up during the pre-landing flare.

But if it works! It will be glorious! Men piloting their craft into orbit and then piloting it back to a graceful touchdown onto a runway! The dreams this realizes! The wonderful, marvelous dreams that do come true! And it's happening now. The future is now, and we're all a part of it. It is truly the future, and it's a wonderful time to be alive.

CRAZIES: And then I swing back down, and think about what happened eight days ago. The spectacle of watching, in color and slow motion, while someone who has little control over his own mind tries to blow away the President of the United States.

I despair for the news media that present us with such a spectacle. And I despair for myself, who could not pull myself away from one gory instant of it.

But if there is one thing I am convinced of now, it is that miracles do still happen. James Brady was shot through the head. I saw it. It was graphic. And yet he survives. He seems not to have lost his faculties. He can talk, he knows who he is and what he does. He still has his sense of humor. When asked what he does, he said, with a smile, "I answer questions." Asked who it was whose questions he answered, he said, "Anyone who asks me." With a wink, even though he could barely open his eyes by himself at the time.

A miracle? Considering the amount of damage an exploding bullet can do and did do to him, I would say so. Why? My theory is prayer. Everyone knew Reagan would be all right, and a lot of people wouldn't really be all that shook up if he died (myself included). But the nation's prayers went out to that man whose mortal agony was rerun in living color and slow motion all afternoon and evening that day in late March. People felt for him, as they felt for the other two who were injured. He is making miraculous progress.

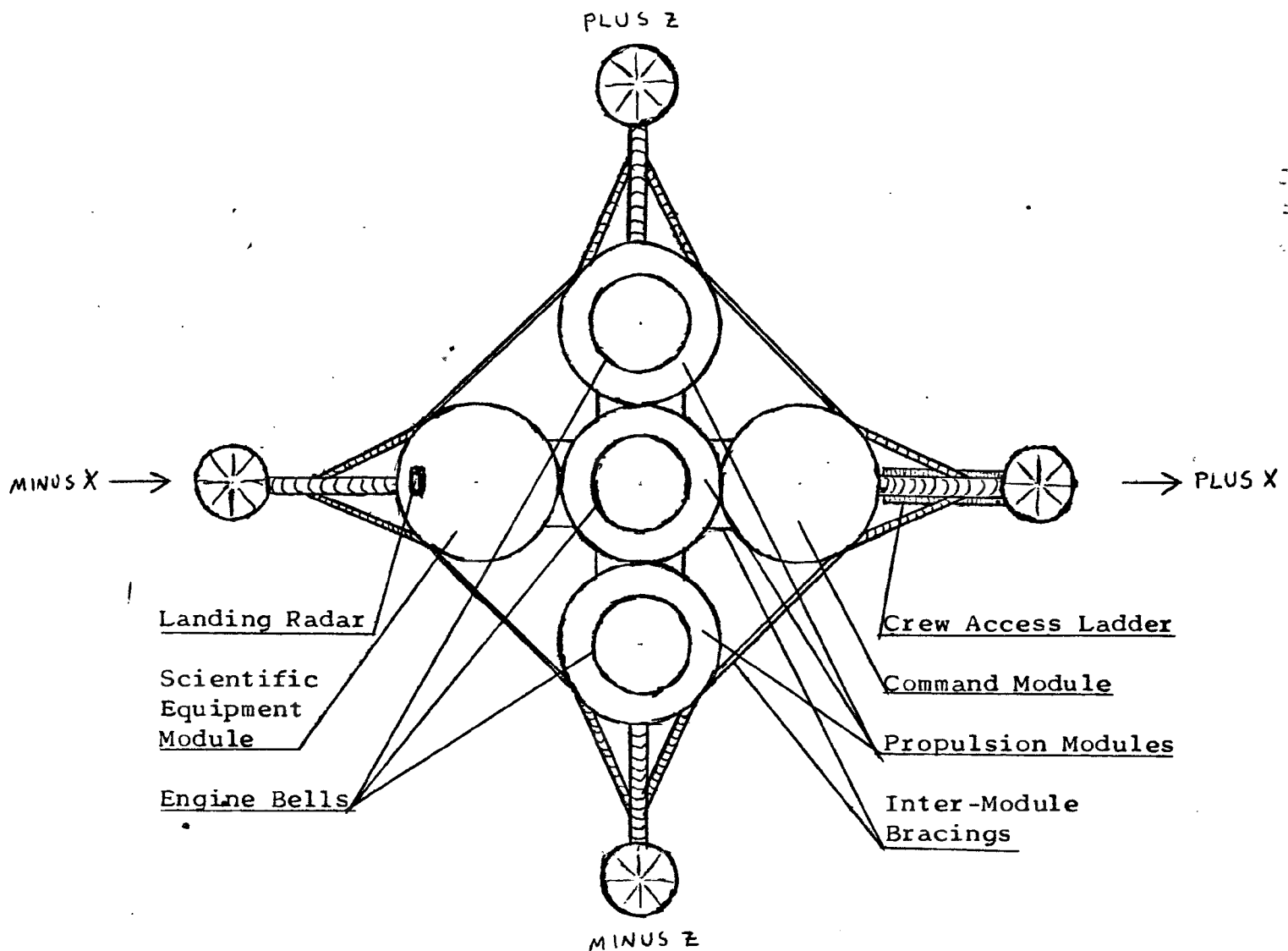
In a world where God seems not to exist, where there is no sense to what happens; in a universe that seems to loom over our poor species and laughs at our feeble attempts to delve into its mysteries; in a cosmos that is so vast that we can mean nothing; in this scientific world where there can be no belief without evidence and proof, there needs to be a well-publicized miracle every now and then. Just to remind us that we are special, that there is a meaning to life.

I didn't mean for my prose to flower so poetic, there. I apologize to all those atheists in the APA who are offended by mentions of God and faith, but my feelings on this are strong, and my words don't begin to do them justice.

APPROPRIATE TECHNOLOGY: The cover of the last APA-Tech is my conception of a shuttle-technology lunar landing and exploration vehicle.

The configuration is basically five cylinders arranged like the dots on a five side of a die; three of them are nearly identical propulsion modules, each with powerful hypergolic engines. One is a crew module, with power and environment control located in it. The last contains the computers, flight electronics, radar system and scientific instruments.

Each of these cylinders would be flown into Earth orbit in a shuttle payload bay, complete in and of themselves. They would be attached and interconnected in orbit. The vehicle would then commute between Earth orbit and the lunar surface. It would be refurbished and refueled by shuttle flights. It could carry lunar roving equipment or pre-fabricated habitats that would assemble on the lunar surface. It could augur in the first age of lunar colonization. And it could be done with existing technology.



Shuttle Technology Lunar Exploration Vehicle
(Bottom View)
"Eagle 2"

The above (typed a while ago, obviously, with a thinner ribbon) is a rough schematic. I have taken the liberty to name my creation "Eagle 2," for obvious reasons.

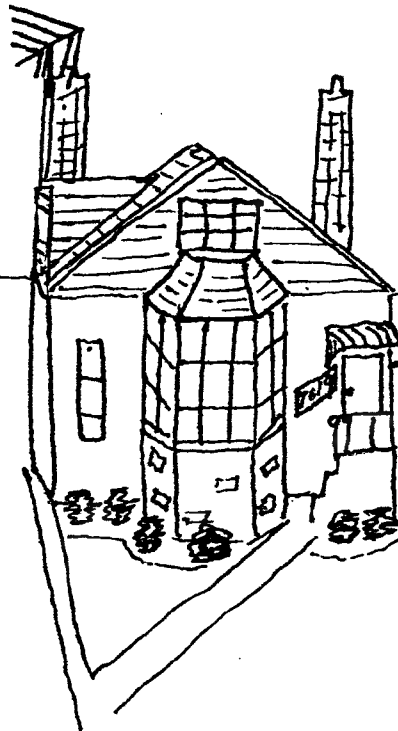
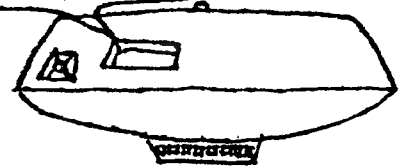
A fleet of these vehicles could be built for roughly the cost of the Apollo program. With Shuttle technology, they could operate for years, amortizing the initial costs over years of use. Operating costs would be cut because of the lack of need for huge Earthbound support teams; five people and three mission-dedicated antennae (or use of the tracking and data relay satellites the shuttle will put up) would be enough to provide continuous support at any one time. And private industry would be encouraged to use this translunar transportation system for the development of new exploitative industrial concepts--lunar mining, for instance.

Scientists would be the big winners, though. Relay satellites in lunar orbit would allow backside landings; enough cable could be carried to make a medium-sized crater into a radio antenna in the best position in the solar system; completely blocked off from Earth by hundreds of miles of lunar rock, it could "see" the radio universe with unprecedented clarity.

That's it for this trip--sorry no MCs. See you in June.

Berserker!

THIS is the
Galactic Capitol?!



Don't worry,
They can Park
on the roof.

BERSERKERBERSERKERBERSERKERBERSERKERBERSERKERBERSERKERBERSERKERBERSERKER

That's right, a BERSERKER! Here in the Galactic Capitol, Chicago.

It's being thrown (and possibly defenestrated) by us, Doug and Gretchen Van Dorn, over the Memorial Day weekend, which falls this year on May 22 thru 25. Since it's one of those Monday holidays, festivities will begin on Friday evening and run all the way until Monday.

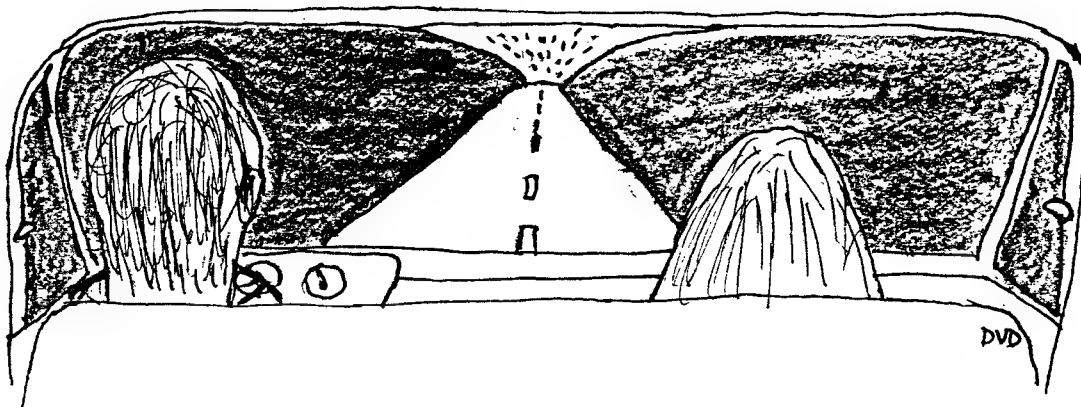
Major highlights being planned at this time are trips to the museums (particularly Science and Industry), music, cookouts, wonderful May weather and frequent trips to the nearby grocery stores.

Our cats will be quarantined for the weekend, but since the hair tends to get everywhere no matter what you do, for those allergic to such things, normal cat-pill type precautions should be taken.

There is no requirement that you bring something (except yourselves), but there is also no guarantee that we won't try to make you feel guilty if you don't. Pop, bread and munchies are always good bets to bring, and don't worry about duplication. We'll need all everyone brings, and then some.

Our only problem here is parking. There are two bathrooms, no waiting, and plenty of room for ~~dead~~ sleeping bodies to lie around, but only the street to park on. So, to keep our neighbors from getting mad and calling the cops on us, try if you can to consolidate people and cars as much as possible.

"No, we are not alone. We are lost!"



YOU CAN GET HERE FROM THERE: The following directions should lead you right here, which is defined as 7619 W. Clarence Ave., Chicago, IL 60631. If you get completely lost, you can always call (312)763-1376. Some kind of indication that you are coming would also be nice, but is not necessary.

FROM THE NORTH: Take either 90 or 94 towards the city. Follow the signs to the Kennedy Expy. The first exit off the Kennedy is Cumberland--take Cumberland North. Now see the General Directions.

FROM THE SOUTH: Take 55 or 57 into the city. Get on the Tri-State Tollway, exit where it says "To O'Hare, Kennedy Expy. and Northwest Tollway." Follow the signs carefully--you are entering the most complex highway interchange in the world. Get on the Kennedy, get off at Cumberland North. Now see the General Directions.

FROM THE EAST: You can either get on the Chicago Skyway, the Dan Ryan or the Tri-State. The Skyway will merge into the Dan Ryan (90/94), which will come to the Loop Interchange where you can get on the Kennedy. Take the Kennedy almost all the way out to O'Hare, get off at Cumberland North. Now see General Directions.

FROM THE WEST: Anyone I can think of who would come in from the west already knows how to get here, anyway.

GENERAL DIRECTIONS: Now that I have all of you where I want you (heh heh heh), that is, just off the Kennedy on Cumberland, you go straight north past two lights. At the third light, Devon Ave., turn right. You will pass two more lights--one at Talcott (a five- or six-point intersection) and one at Canfield. The first side street past Canfield is Overhill. Turn right again. Then turn left on the third street in, Clarence. We are down towards the end of the block, on the right side, at 7619.

FOR NON-DRIVERS: We are reasonably close to a commuter rail line station and a CTA El station. If you are downtown, take either the Chicago Northwestern Northwest line and get off at Edison Park and call or take the CTA to the Jefferson Park station (Congress-Milwaukee and Douglas-Milwaukee lines) and call. Someone will pick you up.

ARRIVAL TIMES: Since in the worst case Gretchen might be at work and I might be asleep (third shift, you know), try to come after 6 p.m. on Friday. When you leave is entirely up to you.

Hope you can all make it and have a good time!

THE JERRY-BUILT ZINE;

Pushdown Stacks and Arabian Nights

Published by Irrelevant Titles Press, S. A., a subsidiary of Jerry Corrigan,
1304 Turtle Creek Drive, Apt. E, Palatine, IL 60067, (312)934-1243.

I suppose I could start this off by introducing myself, but I've been told that friends of mine have done that already. On second thought, I don't trust those friends, so maybe I'd better introduce myself my own way.

My name is Gerald Corrigan. I am presently employed as an electrical engineer in Motorola's Digital Technology Research Laboratory. Before I started work at Motorola, I was a student at the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign. I've been hanging around fandom since Windycon 4. I'd include more, but most of the people reading this have probably seen my biodata in Pyro, and things haven't changed much since I wrote that.

So much for introducing myself. I really don't have much to say this time. I considered trying to borrow a copy of Apa-Tech so I could fill up space with mailing comments, but it seems unfair to get my comments in without first giving people a chance to comment on what I wrote. Besides, I want to get this typed today.

That last was typed on Sunday. Now it's Tuesday and, despite several suggestions from friends, I still don't know what to write about. As I don't want to make this a zine about my troubles writing zines, I might as well write about work.

I get most of my information about Motorola's activities from the trade press. For example, I saw an item in EE Times recently which said that Motorola had announced the Memory Management Unit for the MC68000. This was the first I'd heard about it, despite my repeated requests for information on the 68000 and its peripherals. I'm always told, "You're getting all the information we are." (One of my coworkers has a sign above his desk claiming, "I am a mushroom. I must be a mushroom. They keep me in the dark and feed me bullshit." It seems to describe our situation accurately.) I'm not quite certain what is meant by "announced". Motorola has been telling people for a long time that they were going to make the thing, and I still haven't seen any good technical description of the chip.

I nearly became an elf recently. A certain vice-president of Motorola wanted some toys made up as a promotional item. (They would have been given to customers.) When I was assigned the job of designing and building the things, I was told that I must be Santa's (i.e. the vice-president's) elf. Fortunately, the project was cancelled. I think the vice-president had an attack of common sense when he saw my estimate of the project's cost. I still want the elf hat that Gretchen's making. That vice-president is sure to give someone an excuse to wear it.

The vagueness of the preceding paragraph is deliberate. I don't like to be specific in print. I realize that I'm being paranoid, but I'd rather not provide a permanent record of statements which could be construed as a breach of my nondisclosure agreement with Motorola, which means almost any statement I could make about what I do at Motorola. I have to write a report each month on the projects on which I work. These reports are classified company confidential. It seems silly, but this would imply that anything I do for Mo is classified company confidential.

You probably deserve a few words of warning about my titles. While they will generally have very little to do with the content of the zine, I will have gotten the title from somewhere. I'm not going to explain the title unless someone asks, which is probably not a good idea. I'll make an exception this time to illustrate the point.

Rolf recently forced me to buy a copy of Sir Richard Francis Burton's translation of The Book of the Thousand Nights and a Night. ("Look, Jerry, a copy of Burton's translation of the Arabian Nights for only seventy dollars." "Rolf, please stop me from buying it." (In a wicked tone) "Go ahead. You can afford it." I got my revenge a few weeks later when Rolf went on a spending spree at the bookstores and I wasn't there to restrain him. Der Trupp für wirtschaftlichen Selbstmord über alles!) When I began reading it, I found that the stories operated as a pushdown stack. The main story is that of Shahrazad's attempt to put a stop to King Shahyar's daily murders. She does this by telling stories, in which the characters tell stories, in which. . . When I was trying to think of a title for this zine, I began looking through my bookshelves and when I glanced at the Arabian Nights, it occurred to me that "Pushdown Stacks and Arabian Nights" was suitably irrelevant and incomprehensible.

The translation from the German in the preceding paragraph has some ambiguity, so I'd like to point out that "Der Trupp für wirtschaftlichen Selbstmord" is meant to mean "The Economic Suicide Squad", not "The Economical Suicide Squad". I had intended to try to translate it into French, but I couldn't find a dictionary that would give the French for squad. In any case, I studied some German in high school, so I can fake the grammar better.

It occurs to me that, although it should be easy to figure out what the Economic Suicide Squad does, it's still an inside reference to ChUSFA. I suppose I really should explain a bit about it. It all started when one member of ChUSFA was given a coupon for a twenty percent discount on one purchase at the book center at the Illini Union. No limit was placed on the size of the purchase, so he let us get in on the discount. I'm not sure who coined the term, but that attack on the Book Center was the first Economic Suicide Squad raid.

I'm taking a statistics course at the moment. Everyone in the class has a college degree, but it seems that some of them didn't know what a slope is. That term is explained to high school freshmen. I would have found the pace of the course to be slow even then. ("Now everybody hold my hand so you don't get lost while I show you around the world of mathematics.") I get bored on Monday nights.

Another item from the fair warning department: I enjoy twisted logic. For example, did you know that the Declaration of Independence states that the Creator denies us happiness? We are endowed with the right to pursue happiness. One cannot pursue what one already has. therefore, we cannot have happiness.

My inclusion of the preceding paragraph might give one the impression that I am in a hurry to finish this and putting down any drivel that occurs to me. This impression is correct. It is now 7:12 A. M. on Tuesday, April 7. If I want to get this in before the grace period ends, I have to get this mailed today. I'm about to leave for work, so I'll quit typing now.

Jerry

Dr. Gonzo's Erratic Elfabet

the illustrious scribblings of one Valli Hoski who can be found at 1116 Hull Terrace, Evanston IL 60202 ~~when she's no place better like a con~~ and loves to be called at (312) 864-3504 ~~not named please~~. March '81, ApaTech 12.

Well, Is This Going To Be Another Excusezine?

As it actually is a whole 3 weeks before the official deadline, I shall try and make this worthwhile to read ~~and otherwise in a different way~~ as the membership has been rather patient with me lately with my awful and awfully short zines. Let me offer first a few con reports, as I have found myself fairly abroad in the tru-con-fan's style:

ConFusion As I left the last thrilling issue of ApaTech, I was apart to depart for the traditional blizzardcon - ConFusion. Suspiciously this year and last, it has refused to snow and blizzard that weekend, making it a rather strange experience without snow. But ConFusion was rather unexpectedly delightful for me, as I *gasp* actually worked at a con and enjoyed it! Having handled video equipment a bit in one of my previous ~~lives~~ jobs, I offered Larry Tucker some help with the videotaping that he undertakes at every ConFusion. Thus, I found myself suddenly listed as a staff member in the program book, waking up at an early hour on Saturday ~~so as to be~~ ~~elevated~~ to baby-sit some VTR playback session, at which the equipment kindly did not go out of sync or get clogged. The really enjoyable event came later Saturday evening however, as I videotaped Barry Longyear's GoH speech after the banquet. Now, I have not appreciated Longyear's humorous style in his fiction, so I was prepared for a ho-hum-let's-get-on-with-the-parties style of speech. Very pleasantly surprised, I came close to dropping the camera (the tripod saved it) several times during his speech, which was one of the most delightfully humorous I have ever heard ~~yet~~ ~~of~~ ~~him~~ ~~at~~ ~~the~~ ~~con~~ ~~I~~ ~~will~~ ~~like~~ ~~you~~. I realize that a lot of techies enjoyed Larry Niven's speech at Whatcon last year, but Longyear has now usurped Niven as my most memorable GoH.//

Aside from that enjoyable bit of videotaping, I visited with various friends who had not been seen since Conclave, talked a bit, smuffed abit, and ate some fine food. And of course, the traditional ConFusion event, I even danced! Poor Bill Higgins was much in demand at the Masquerade dance on Sat. night, which goes to show that some techies really enjoy dancing! I say, let's have a dance workshop at some Ishercon or besarker! I am not a closet disco-dunce, but I do enjoy slow dances, early rock and roll and an occasional Big Band number, and of course, the Zero-Gee Polka. Do I hear any more dance-loving souls out there?

Capricon 1 Rather amusingly enough, Dick Smith and I found ourselves actually in charge of the con suite at this new local con, brought you by Moebius, Chip & Leah Bestler, Moebius, Doug Price, Moebius, Doug Rice, Moebius, well you understand. We decided that the con suite was going to be done right ~~for once~~ and so we did it. I must acknowledge the fine job that Dick did in setting up and carrying through on Friday night, closing Saturday night and in general managing the evening late shift. Due to some last minute funds from the con comm, the suite never hurt for drinkables, or munchies. I had imagined all sorts of drudgery which could have made the con suite inhabitable, but very happily, my fears were never realized. Of the con itself, I cannot say much, as I spent the majority of time either out eating, running the suite or visiting in the suite or sleeping. The audience of the con seemed to be primarily neos, Trekkies, BSGers, and an occasional SCA or Star Wars type. A few out-of-towners did come, much to my delight, such as Larry Tucker and Leah Zeldes from Ann Arbor, as well as Nancy Tucker and the indubitable and

irrepressible Bob Tucker. Bob himself saved the ~~con~~ day when he graciously stepped in to handle the GoH speech after Terry Carr was forced to be absent by doctor's orders. All in all, it was pleasant to see the people that I did, and while I would not have come a great distance for it, the con was nice to have only a mile or so from home. Fairly innocuous, and fairly pleasant. I appreciate the people who stepped in when asked and helped babysit the con suffice as things were winding down, such as Gretchen Van Down, Bill Leininger, and the rest. After this con and Confusion, I want to work some more! Somebody quick, help this poor femmefan, she has a case of the truly fannish traumas!

Wiscon Again, I was prepared for a rather dull, dogmatic con as Wascon so impressed last year, and was very nicely surprised. Decidedly devoid of techies, Wiscon had a small number of fen from Minneapolis and Chicago there, and a sprinkling from the other midwest fannish conclaves. I missed all the programming on Saturday as I was helping huckster for Dick Spelman, a local friendly Chicago bookdealer. Hm, well, I didn't see much of the programming on the other times either, and the only excuse I have is that I found the people I knew at Wiscon infinitely more interesting. This is not a condemnation of feminism nor the feminist s.f. fen nor the Madison SF group; just an admission of my preferences at this year's con. I did miss Steven V. Johnson's presentation on Friday, which I do regret, as he is one of my favorite artists. I own a print of his, which I will pay Dick Smith for (and then own) Real Soon Now. Ah, for those fellow sybaritic souls in G_m and ApaTech who enjoy such indulgables in life as pleasant soap, shampoo, bubble bath and scented oils, let me recommend a small shop on State St. in Madison called the Soap Opera. It has a heavenly array of scented and natural (all in the same breath) soaps, bubble baths, lotions, oils, shampoos that delights the eye and nose upon walking in. If anyone has a ~~fantasy~~ unfulfilled dream of a particular soap or bubbles, the Soap Opera will help you make it come true ~~even in Honeydew Delon!~~. Amazingly enough, the Madison Inn did not mess up the hotel reservations this year!

Yes, I Do Read Books Too, and Talk a Good Line!

Lately I have come into the pleasure of reading books I enjoy again. For some reason I hit an interval in which everything I read just didn't cogitate right, and either was not exciting or was too depressing. For the next .5 page, I shall sing the praises of some of the better that I have read.

Mushroom: The Story of the A-Bomb Kid by John Aristotle Philips and David Michaelis. Surrounded by all the budding bright and brilliant physicists, astronomers and engineers that I am in G_m, I occasionally get overwhelmed by the notion of particles, magnetic theory, mathematical derivations or other bytes in the rear. Mushroom helped put in all in perspective again. Philips almost manages to make his story sound as if any good techie could design an A-Bomb, given of course that you have Charles Dyson as your advisor, and MacNeil on the faculty as well. The other intimate (and hilarious) details of Philips' undergraduate ~~years~~ years at Princeton reveal the basically precocious and punster personality of the Mushroom Kid. Not aimed at a highly technical audience, I recommend this book to techies ANYWAY because it does such a delightfully terrific job of telling both the scientific (sort of) and human (hilariously) side of trying to survive being an undergraduate at Princeton AND ALSO consciously acting on anti-nuclear proliferation (NOT SOLELY ANTI-NUCLEAR) beliefs. Thanks for Bill Leininger for the nifty Christmas present (the book not bob).

Songs From the Stars by Norman Spinrad. Going from the rather light-hearted and serious autobiography above, to a fiction work which dwells on the white/good/clean technology/society vs. polluting/bad/technology/society theme did wonders for my philosophical outlook. Acknowledging that this work is set in southern California with

all of Spinrad's usual California trappings, the society which is set up as the clean, non-polluting, "true" lifestyle depends solely on energy systems which utilize wind, muscle, water, and sun as their sources. Eagles form a basis of transportation which seem a combination of a solar cycle, hang-glider and tricycle. This society exists on the basis of a tribal structure, and looks with great fear and loathing upon ~~Hunter~~ ~~the~~ the evil society and technology which lurks just over the mountains eastward - the spacers. This fear and dread is double-sided however, for products which are "grey" in both technology and energy sources are traded by citizens of this "white" (clean) society from the spacers (or wielders of "black" technology and energy). The conflict between the differing ideologies and social structures of the two groups is the basis for most of the book, involving Clear Blue Lou and Sunshine Sue, 2 citizens/leaders of the clean/white society. When presented with an opportunity to judge the uses of petroleum and nuclear based technology by the spacers, Clear Blue Lou must face some fundamental advantages/disadvantages of advanced/polluting technology versus exploration in space. Sunshine Sue who dreams of a McLuhenesque global village system of communication for her society, must also make similar decisions and trade-offs in technology and lifestyle. How is it possible to compromise pollution and clean living, having a non-petroleum and-polluting free space ship? Spinrad doesn't provide all the answers, but does spin a fine tale around basic philosophical and social adjustments techies and everyone else may have to make in lifestyle and energy usage in the near future. There aren't any pure good guys, but good things win in the end.

++++ I am so bored, I am just going to call this: +++++

**** Mailing Comments ****
(A/T # 11)

One of the hazards with writing zines in bits and pieces scattered throughout several months is that one's mood can and does change as the pgs and months slip by. Since the above reviews have typed their illustrious way across this page, another con and more good stuff has come my way. Today is also St. Paddy's day. And I want to party. And are there people around me who want to party? No. Great, terrific. Dick is off to a DECUS meeting, and so I am sitting and typing fanzines rather than partying and drinking green beer like I would rather be. My drinking green beer is not solely dependent on Dick, but I just thought I would mention that he is elsewhere lest the question come up as to why am I not out drinking green beer with Dick? Isn't life fun.

All right, all right, enough with the groups. Let's get on with the commentary and ravings on last ish:

Bill R. Yup, you're right, you will hear "I told you" every time something goes wrong and the country and economy skid their way to the Crash of '82. I have yet to see indications otherwise. I am not going to waste my good breath on what is going to happen to the progress that women have made, and its going down the drain in good old Moral Majority dictates. I am not even going to bother. I will just move to Milwaukee and have my 6 kids and the hell with the future. I am in a terribly grumpy mood so I shan't discuss politics.//Space programs huh? With his budgetary priorities, the only way space seems to have any chance with Raygun is to cleverly disguise itself as militaristic. How feasible would it be to convert the laser into a peaceful energy supply?//What does that elusive comment that only I will understnad of that? (page 2, paragraph 2)//YOU hope your fears, er sorry, I mean, my fears prove unfounded, gads I hope mine do!//Re yr ct Doug: yes, take a look at how much food the Communist countries import, think of the psychological impact of withdrawl of Western (read USA) wheat, and why is Raygun incapable of maintaining the psychological pressure of the embargo?

Rod Yes, I did see you at Marcon, welcome to the annual G_m reunion con!!

Hm, you may not write with a southern accent, but in a conversation the other day, friends and I were commenting on the style of British books. I can usually tell when a novel (detective, whatever) has been written by a British author as the sentence structure is slightly different, with emphasis placed on different phrases, etc. than American English. I mean it just reads and sounds British in my mind. But then maybe my mind is just pure Anglophiliac.

David D. Levine Your Windycon sounds a bit hectic and very full of techies as mine was. I managed to successfully hide with some close G_m friends for most of the duration of Windycon as I was too lost too soon after Noreascon in the awful too big crowds of the con. It was delightful to have everyone over at my house on Sunday afternoon, and I sort of felt reaffirmed in my closeness with G_m.//Your excursion through Lovely 'Illinois and Hoosierstate sound scenic. Conclave for me was not centered around G_m, which was fine, as I began to make some new and fine friends. I do remember the chocolate party again, hm, which reminds me, maybe that is when G_m began its adolescence that continued at Ishercon! The TV disturbed me strongly, as I go to cons not to watch Sat. night television but to be with the people that I can't be otherwise.//Ishercon is always sentimental for me, but this year I found myself caught between people, rush, impoliteness and too much intensity. Maybe next year.//Re yr ct somewhere in your zine that I use ellipses a lot: I did but I have stopped when more people were getting confused than not. Same for my con reports.//Make that my extended version of con reports.//

Martha Confusion and the rest of the eastern midwest cons are a different breed than the usual west midwest cons, I have discovered. You may forgive them, but will they forgive you for being from the west-midwest? Cryptic comment # 574.//Contrary to my initial impressions, I actually enjoyed working at Capricon! There was no hassle with any one in the con suite (although Dick was the one who had to close at 5:00 AM, not me), or at least not any that were unforgivable. But then I was not a member of the official con comm, and didn't have to deal with the ghods-on-high-hotel folks. Anytime anyone wants another friendly con suite, just let me know.//

Misha RAEBNC but when will we see you again?

Self Go ahead, rant, rave, about TV and not computers. See how far it will get you.

Jamie Hi, miss you at the midwest G_m gatherings. Denver?//Thanks for liking my Noreascon report, as I began to sometimes wonder if it was even worth the effort of putting anything non-computer related here anymore.//Was very nice to be able to talk with you and see your face at Noreascon.

Greg Really liked your illos on your spaceship zine!//I am continually surprised to see you at midwest cons, as I think of you as one of our G_m persons-in-absentia, so don't be amazed when I look surprised and hug you hello all the time. Thanks for informing that Jupiter & Saturn were those 2 bright things I kept seeing in the sky, as I was wondering. The derivations I skip over, but liked the illos.

Donna Good luck on your new abode and your new ventures.//Roxanne -- ditto.

Bibliotech (Jon) Welcome, albeit briefly and in passing.//Hm, an 8-yr. old box is a bit much too old for me. I think a 1 week old one would be too much for me. A friend of the family had one and I only admired it from afar.

Gordon Very nicely at zine.//Re yr cts "fandom/family": presently I find myself being in the process of making close fannish friends that are not G_m centered, and am caught in a love/hate conflict between caring about the good in people and being pissed at their standards of exclusivity.//Please come back sometime.

oops. No more room. Mike -- Gads, someone else who knows what CAI is?? I thought I was all alone out in the world. I will talk more to you in a later zine. The rest of you enjoy spring and this has shot my margins!!